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THE USE OF LIFE HISTORY COLLAGE TO EXPLORE LEARNING RELATED
TO THE ENACTMENT OF SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS
IN FEMALE NONPROFIT LEADERS

by

Susan R. Seymour

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree

of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

Education

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2012

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ABSTRACT

The Use of Life History Collage to Explore Learning Related to the Enactment of
Social Consciousness in Female Nonprofit Leaders

by

Susan R. Seymour, Doctor of Philosophy

Utah State University, 2012

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The purpose of this study was to consider the development of social consciousness in female nonprofit leaders. The problem undergirding the study is that we do not know enough about social consciousness to know how it is learned, if it can be taught, if it is stable over a lifetime, and what factors and life events shape its unique expression. A further concern is understanding how people come to enact caring about social justice causes and why they enacted caring about certain causes but not others.

The research investigated learning related to the social consciousness of female nonprofit leaders who work with organizations focused on social justice issues. The research method utilized, life history collage, employed a combination of art and life history to investigate this phenomenon. Once collages were made, participants were interviewed to further explore emergent themes and these themes were analyzed using the learning theory enactivism to understand how learning influenced each woman's social

consciousness.

Findings indicate that organizing structures emerged in childhood that both enabled and shaped the potential of each woman's social consciousness. This "potential" was inherent in the structure of each woman's world view, but was enacted in the way this structure coupled with opportunities in her environment. In other words, each woman's social consciousness coemerged within environments that shaped her social consciousness and that were shaped by her social consciousness. Thus, social consciousness and environment are mutually specifying.

This research implies that the development of social consciousness is a personal expression rooted as much in personality as environmental opportunity. Furthermore, unique personal constructs such as frugality, social mobility, mental illness, and a desire for holistic relationships can be the catalyst for involvement in social action without a direct correlation to social justice awareness. If an environment "triggers" something in an individual, whatever that something is, then a connection will be made and action will result—sometimes social action.

(225 pages)

PUBLIC ABSTRACT

The Use of Life History Collage to Explore Learning Related to the Enactment of
Social Consciousness in Female Nonprofit leaders

by

Susan R. Seymour, Doctor of Philosophy

Utah State University, 2012

This paper advances a novel qualitative research approach using life history collage. Rather than utilizing an interview protocol to enter into a participant's story, life history collage invites participants to create a longitudinal collage of significant life events around a theme such as learning, relationships, or identity. The longitudinal nature of the collage situates and prioritizes significant life events with images, words, and elements chosen to represent events and circumstances. Each image within the collage contains rich and nuanced storylines that invite exploration by both researcher and participant. Meanings and subtexts are revealed as participants describe their collage and the choices they made regarding image and representation. This research method was used to explore the enactment of learning related to social consciousness in female nonprofit leaders.

Enactivism, a biologically based learning theory, was used to analyze themes that emerged in the life history collages. The structural organization of each participant related to social consciousness was examined and a consideration of how this structure

coupled with environmental opportunities to coemerge social consciousness was explored. Findings indicated that the structural organizations related to each woman's social consciousness were shaped in childhood, but were enacted in late adolescence and adulthood and were not directly ascribed to constructs of social action. In other words, constructs such as frugality, responsibility, and class mobility were structures that drove women to couple with opportunities to "make a difference."

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

While I am grateful to the men who have been strong enough to keep company with strong women, it is strong women who have shaped my life. My mother taught me to be independent; Peggy Cain took a chance on me and mentored me in my return to academia and the classroom; Susan Turner advised me over donuts and heartfelt sharing; and Martha Whitaker put up with multiple crying fits and severe cognitive dissonance while maintaining unflappable clarity and belief in the doctoral process. The amazing women of Nishtha in West Bengal, India (Pretilla, Kabita, Mina, Mimi, Manami, and Mati) welcomed me into their homes and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) so that I might conduct a pilot study and learn about the development of their own social consciousness. Finally, I am indebted to my four participants who gave their time and history to this project. Their stories touched my heart and continue to inspire me on a daily basis. I hope anyone who reads their stories will also be inspired to go forth into this world and make a difference.

Susan R. Seymour

DEDICATION

To my father—thank you for raising me to think, to dream, and to believe in myself.

To my sons—thank you for loving me enough to be okay with me being a “mediocre mother” while I was completing this degree, for keeping it down while I was writing, for warming dinners in the microwave, and for believing in me.

To my husband—there are no words. Your love and support of me and our family are the foundation that enables me to dream, risk, and achieve goals in my life. You inspire the best in me.

Susan R. Seymour

CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT.....	iii
PUBLIC ABSTRACT	v
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	vii
DEDICATION	viii
LIST OF TABLES	xi
LIST OF FIGURES	xii
CHAPTER	
I. INTRODUCTION	1
Background and Statement of the Problem	1
Theoretical Lens.....	3
Research Purpose and Questions	6
Significance of the Study	6
Limitations and Delimitations.....	9
II. LITERATURE REVIEW	16
Introduction.....	16
Social Consciousness.....	16
Nonprofits: Expressions of Social Consciousness.....	21
Enactivism.....	26
III. METHODOLOGY	35
Pilot Study.....	35
Life History Collage Research Approach	38
Arts-Based Research Methods	42
Arts-Informed Research.....	45
Visual Art and Collage.....	48
Research Mechanics and Methodological Findings	52

IV. DATA AND ANALYSIS	80
Analysis Strategy	80
Freya's Enacted Social Consciousness	85
Joy's Enacted Social Consciousness.....	100
Julia's Enacted Social Consciousness.....	113
Grace's Enacted Social Consciousness.....	128
Reflection.....	143
V. IMPLICATIONS	149
Overview.....	149
Implications for Practice	150
Implications for Theory	155
Suggestions for Future Research	159
REFERENCES	162
APPENDIX.....	171
CURRICULUM VITAE.....	210

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Distribution of Nonprofit Employment Across Organization Type in the United States	25

LIST OF FIGURES

Figures	Page
1. Freya's collage	67
2. Julia's collage.....	67
3. Grace's collage.....	67
4. Joy's collage.....	67
5. Fishing fly	69
6. Beer photo	71
7. Image for lettuce pickers.....	72
8. John F. Kennedy	72
9. Image represents Aunt Dolly	73
10. Party dress.....	73
11. Bird drawing	74
12. Scribbled line	75
13. Line depicting life shift.....	76
14. Childhood images	76
15. Nested levels of learning.....	157

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

My uncle's voice raises in anger, his face flushed (perhaps from the alcohol, perhaps from rage), "Those God-damned bleeding heart liberals leave water out in the dessert for them! It's as if they are welcoming them into this country! They should all be arrested." I cannot believe my ears. Is he actually lamenting the fact that some people leave bottled water in the desert so that immigrants crossing the border do not die from thirst? I protest, indicating that saving a life is surely more important than honoring broken immigration policies, but my comments are met with derision and contempt. I look around the living room at these people I love: my grandmother, aunts, uncles, mother, cousins and am baffled. I am the God-damned bleeding heart liberal and I am despised for it. What happened? How did I come to care for and want to do something about the suffering of humanity's most unfortunate while they do not?

Background and Statement of the Problem

As an educator, I have often pushed myself to gain an awareness of how to bring social justice issues into my classroom, and during my doctoral studies I came to understand that social justice dispositions are often a strong focus in teacher training programs (Spalding, Klecka, Lin, Odell, & Wang, 2010). Garmon (2004) and Mills and Ballantyne (2010) have worked to determine the critical factors necessary for teachers to embrace a social justice orientation, while others have investigated ways in which teachers can be taught to enact a social justice disposition in their teaching (Agarwal,

Epstein, Oppenheim, Oyler, & Sonu, 2010; Chubbuck, 2010). While all of this literature is extremely helpful in considering how to promote social justice dispositions in teacher education programs, I found it prescriptive in nature and was left with little understanding of how social justice orientations grow “organically” and become internalized in individuals who act on this orientation without instruction or conditioning. Also, none of these studies were longitudinal and gave little indication of whether or not social justice orientations would “stick” when faced with real world difficulties and applications. As Joe Kincheloe pointed out, “mainstream teacher education provides little insight into the forces that shape teacher identity and consciousness” (2006, p. 181).

For over two centuries, progressive educational reformers such as Maria Montessori, John Dewey, Johann Pestalozzi, and Paulo Freire advocated educational programs that prepare individuals for democratic processes meant to foster ethical, sustainable, and caring relationships. Modern interpretations of these ideals is seen in the work of Rianne Eisler (1987, 2000) and Nel Noddings (1984, 2005) who championed models of partnership and care-based education organized around concepts of mutuality, reliance, and cooperation rather than domination, competition, and exploitation. All of these educational philosophers promoted educational reforms meant to affect social justice orientations, or what I (and others) refer to as *social consciousness* (Ammentorp, 2007; Berman, 1997; Giddings, 2005; Schlitz, Vieten, & Miller, 2010). However, the problem is we do not know enough about social consciousness to know how it is learned, if it can be taught, if it is stable over a lifetime, and what factors and life events shape its unique expression. In other words, how do people come to enact caring about social

justice causes and why do they enact caring about certain causes but not others? This research studied the lives of individuals who have demonstrated a strong social consciousness (in this case female nonprofit leaders) to develop a deeper understanding of how their learning processes influenced the development of their social consciousness.

Theoretical Lens

While social consciousness can have many definitions (Ammenthorp, 2007; Berman, 1997; Giddings, 2005; Schlitz et al., 2010), for this study, it was defined as an evolving understanding of others' perspectives and realities, an awareness of how personal actions may affect others, and an increasing sense of agency towards promoting equity and responsibility. This definition roots social consciousness in both knowledge and action. It implies that it is not enough to know that inequity exists; one must act on this knowledge. Because such social consciousness is rooted in action, a logical approach to understanding how social consciousness evolves is through learning theories nested in embodied cognition (Davis & Sumara, 1997; Fenwick, 2003), or put another way, cognition tied to everyday lived experience.

However, traditional cognitive sciences have “had virtually nothing to say about what it means to be human in everyday, lived situations” (Varela, Thompson, & Rosch, 1991, p. xv). This is largely due to mental representations and symbolic processing views that dominate research and publishing in the cognitive sciences, views that contain “a strong, often tacit and unquestioned, commitment to realism or objectivism/subjectivism about the way the world is, what we are, and how we come to know the world” (Varela et

al., 1991, p. 9). To clarify, learning is often construed as a mental representation of an objective reality or a subjective interpretation of an objective reality. This consideration of learning says nothing about how our lived experience, the embodied nature of knowing, shapes what we know or how we can come to know.

Varela and colleagues (1991; see also Maturana & Varela, 1987) promoted a theory of learning in which embodiment is seen as the fundamental axis of knowledge, cognition and experience. Furthermore, their learning theory requires the explicit thematization of embodiment in a double sense: “it encompasses both the body as a lived experiential structure and the body as the context or milieu of cognitive mechanisms” (Varela et al., 1991, p. xvi). To simplify, this means that the learner is not a blank slate capable of learning, interpreting, and representing objective realities. Rather, the learner is shaped by the multitude of lived experiences from her history—she does not see the world as it is, she sees the world as she is, or rather as she has become. And this embodied understanding has the potential to shape, enable or limit her learning.

Furthermore, enactivism asserts that cognition depends on experiences that come from having a body with various sensorimotor capacities which is embedded in biological, psychological and cultural environments. This embedment is multi-directional in that learners adapt and learn from their environment and their environment ‘learns’ from them. This phenomenon is called “coemergence” (Varela et al., 1991) and represents a structural coupling between the learner and the environment which enacts change in both. This “coupling” represents a domain of possible interactions in which a learner can enter into, but this domain is “specified, and potentially limited, by its own

organization, identity, understanding and history” (Baerveldt & Verheggen, 1999, p. 196). Furthermore, it is important to recognize that while the structural coupling between learner and environment is mutual, the learner specifies the structural changes and signifies which elements from the environment constitute acts of cognition. As Proulx (2008) noted, “the environment acts ‘as a trigger’ for the species to evolve—as much as species act as ‘triggers’ for the environment to evolve” (p. 16). Davis and Sumara (1997) describe coemergence through the analogy of a conversation. Although individuals may enter a conversation with a set viewpoint about what will be discussed, those involved respond to the conversation while simultaneously shaping it. We shape the conversation and the conversation shapes us.

Because social consciousness emerges over time and through action, enactivism is perfectly suited to consider this learning through an investigation of the enactment of social consciousness in my participants’ lived histories. Enactivism enabled me to explore my participant’s life histories such that the interaction between themselves and their environment, as well as the historical navigation of this relationship, revealed meaningful patterns of learning and action. Furthermore, enactivism resonated with me personally because I have always had an interest in the way individuals come to make meaning. While I understand “meaning making” is influenced by social, political and cultural contexts, my interests always gravitate to an individual’s intrapersonal understandings. Hence, I am naturally attracted to learning theories that approach learning from a psychological framework, rather than a social or cultural framework. However, I believe enactivism offers unique learning insight because it considers the

internal structures of an individual and how these structures interact and evolve within the learner's environment; thus moving beyond mere psychological understandings of learning to contextualized psychological understandings. Specifically, this research describes how two major theoretical components of enactivism (structural coupling and coemergence) shape a meaningful understanding of how learning related to social consciousness was enacted in four female nonprofit leaders.

Research Purpose and Questions

The purpose of this research was to (a) investigate learning related to the social consciousness of female nonprofit leaders who work with organizations focused on social justice issues; (b) employ a combination of art and life history to investigate this phenomenon; and (c) utilize the learning theory enactivism to understand how this learning influenced each woman's social consciousness and led them to commit to nonprofit work. My research questions were as follows.

1. What are the significant life events and circumstances that influenced the enactment of social consciousness in each female nonprofit leader?
2. How was learning related to social consciousness enacted from these events or life circumstances for each female nonprofit leader?
3. How did this learning influence the nonprofit leader's social action?

Significance of the Study

Current research in social consciousness has considered its development through

stage models (Giddings, 2005; Schlitz et al., 2010) and as a result of pedagogical interventions aimed at affecting its development (Ammentorp, 2007; Berman, 1997; Schlitz et al., 2010). Berman investigated the development of social consciousness resulting in social responsibility in young children for his Harvard doctoral dissertation. He analyzed and suggested educational interventions thought to affect the positive development of social consciousness. Ammentorp developed an art-based social justice curriculum for sixth-grade students. The “Where I Live” curriculum helps students develop social consciousness through an awareness of themselves situated in a context and a sense of their social responsibility within that context. Giddings conducted a phenomenological study of social consciousness in New Zealand nurses for her doctoral study. Her intent was to understand the relationship between a nurse’s social consciousness and the negations, trivialization, and/or marginalization of their cultural and personal contexts (Maori, African American, and Lesbian).

Perhaps the most comprehensive study of social consciousness is based on more than a decade of research by the Institute of Noetic Sciences and spearheaded by Drs. Marilyn Schlitz, Cassandra Vieten, and Tina Amorok (2008; see also Schlitz et al., 2010). This research focuses on social consciousness from a transformational and human potential perspective, and considers affecting this transformation through the intervention of spiritual experience and practice.

All of this work has been important is shaping conceptual definitions of social consciousness (see in particular, Ammentorp, 2007) and delineating it from similar concepts such as altruism (Berman, 1997). Although my own study acknowledges this

existing research, it diverged in several important ways. Because this study was based on life histories, I considered the development of social consciousness as a highly personal and contextual construct. Furthermore, although several researchers have promoted pedagogies to foster social consciousness (Ammenthorp, 2007; Berman, 1997; Schlitz et al., 2010) this work considered *learning* related to social consciousness and interpreted the data through a learning theory—a gap in the literatures for both social consciousness as well as learning theories.

To clarify, enactivism is a learning theory, but it is more than a learning theory because it emerged from the work of cognitive scientists who study the workings of the mind and consider learning as one subset within a larger epistemological framework. Learning theories emanating from education include behaviorism, constructivism, and social constructionism, and represent the concept of learning through psychological or sociological constructs that explain human responses related to the acquisition, application or reproduction of knowledge (Ernest, 2010). However, cognitive science is an interdisciplinary science that draws on the fields of neuroscience, psychology, philosophy, computer science, artificial intelligence, linguistics, and education. Cognitive science examines what cognition is and how it works and includes research on intelligence and behavior, low-level learning and decision making, high-level logic and planning, and neural mapping and brain organization which considers how perception, language, memory, reasoning, and emotion is represented, processed, and transformed within nervous systems.

Historically, cognitive science developed models of the mind as information

processors that explained human perception, thinking, and learning and a fundamental principle of cognitive science was to represent thinking as structures in the mind and computational procedures that operate on those structures (Varela et al., 1991). However, by the early 1990s many cognitive scientists were becoming frustrated with constructs of computational representation as an unquestioned truth in their discipline and a “commitment to realism or objectivism/subjectivism about the way the world is, what we are and how we come to know the world” (Varela et al., 1991, p. 9). Thus, when Varela and his colleagues introduced their Theory of Enactivism to the field in 1991, the biologically based theory provided much needed alternative view into how learners make sense of their world and are shaped by their interactions within it. In the purist sense, enactivism is a theory of human interaction and evolution. However, for this study I am considering a narrow application of enactivism as it relates to learning, and while enactivism as a learning theory has prominence in the literature, this research provides a novel application of theory to practice.

Finally, this study helped fill a need to better understand female nonprofit leaders, their learning related to motivation for nonprofit work, and why some individuals demonstrated extraordinary levels of social consciousness through lifetime commitments to “other.”

Limitations and Delimitations

Limitations

Memory and recall. Oral history is the interviewing of eye-witness participants

about past events for the purposes of historical reconstruction (Perks & Thomson, 2002). The focus of oral history as historical reconstruction places this form of narrative in the peculiar position of oral evidence, and has raised issues over the years regarding its usefulness and validity (Dhunpath, 2000; Munchmore, 1999; see also the philosophical underpinnings presented by Alheit, 2005).

The purpose for oral history testimony is important because it sets up two camps of thought, which might be described as traditionalist and interpretivist.¹ Those in the traditionalist camp, who seek to use oral history as an additional source in the traditional formation of historical analysis, articulate concerns about the credibility of sources (Portelli, 2002) and the reliability of memory in oral testimony (Greele, 2002; Johnson & Dawson, 2002). The traditionalist's concerns about memory are countered by theorists in the interpretive camp who argue that memory is the *object* of oral history rather than the method (Frisch, 2002); that rememberings are a form of truth (Johnson & Dawson, 2002); and that memory, because it is tied to identity, can be multiple, contradictory and shifting (Norquay, 1990).

Interestingly, many life historians do not foreground claims to objectivity because the focus of analysis is not on the individual's factual remembrances of history or personal experience of history, but rather the individual's life *as* history—as a series of lived experiences and the meanings made from these experiences (Antikainen, 1998; Antikainen & Kauppila, 2002; Biesta, Hodkinson, & Goodson, 2005; Henning, 2000;

¹ Greele (2002) reviewed the work of four scholars who have most contributed to the debates over the nature of oral history. Thus, although it could be argued that four schools of thought exist regarding the purposes of oral history, these arguments fall down on one or the other side of the traditionalist/interpretivist split.

Munchmore, 1999; Tedder & Biesta, 2007). As Peter Alheit (2005) stated, “Our stories are structured by historical times and material worlds, but that those times and worlds are deeply influenced by the way people construct, tell and write their own stories” (p. 201). In other words, life histories are less about contributing to an objective understanding of historical events and more about understanding the ways in which individuals make sense of their lives and lived experience. Thus, as a possible limitation to this research, I did not foreground claims to objectivity, nor did I question my participant’s memories as valid, meaningful or representative of lived and/or remembered truth.

Life stories. Biesta and colleagues (2005) claimed “life history research aims to understand [individual] stories against the background of wider socio-political and historical contexts and processes” (p. 4). As a smaller unit of analysis, a life story is the “primary unit of analysis for life history research” and the story becomes *history* when it is contextualized within the participants voice and the “larger cultural and political imperatives” (Biesta et al., 2005, p. 4). Cole and Knowles (2001) and Janesick (2010) were far less particular about the rules and definitions of life history research as their central aim in conducting life histories as social justice projects and as mechanisms to understand lived experience and our world. However, within the more formal realms of life history analysis, my research may technically not be considered life history because I did not analyze my participant’s stories against a wider sociopolitical and historical milieu. To clarify, the purpose of this research was not to establish an in-depth relationship between my participants’ life histories to social, cultural or political dynamics, but rather to understand their learning as it emerged out of their lived histories;

recognizing, of course, that social, cultural and political dynamics exist within these histories that shaped learning. However, this research did not conduct in depth social, cultural and political analysis of the stories told by each woman, and only considered these dynamics as they emerged from her narrative about her learning. While this focus limits the breadth of understanding possible, it allows a deeper exploration of the dynamics of learning.

Delimitations

Empathy and altruism. The Oxford English dictionary defines empathy as: The power of projecting one's personality into (and so fully comprehending) the object of contemplation. Schantz (2007) stated that empathy "connotes a vicarious participation in other people's emotions, ideas, or opinions" (p. 51), but that "mere empathy" (p. 52) lacks the urge to intervene and abate man's suffering. Altruism, on the other hand, embodies an orientation to action as shown in the definition: Devotion to the welfare of others, regard for others, as a principle of action; opposed to egoism or selfishness (Oxford English Dictionary, 2011). Although Reuter, Frenzel, Walter, Markett and Montag (2010) indicated that empathy is a precursor to altruism, altruism extends beyond empathy into a committed "selfless concern for the welfare of others" (p. 1).

During data collection, it became apparent that for these women a prerequisite to social consciousness is altruism, although this connection had never clearly been made in the literature investigating social consciousness. Altruism is defined as an unselfish regard for or devotion to the welfare of others. Altruism can be distinguished from loyalty or duty, both of which stem from moral obligation towards a specific individual,

collective, or concept. Altruism is a motivation to provide something of value to anyone but the self and pure altruism expects no direct or indirect benefit from this giving (Oliner & Oliner, 1988).

In defining social consciousness, it would be easy to conflate it with altruism and see the terms as synonymous. However, just as empathy is a precursor to altruism, but not completely altruism (Reuter et al., 2010), so too is altruism a precursor to social consciousness, but not completely social consciousness (Berman, 1997). Social consciousness implies a way of seeing oneself in the world, as well as a way of seeing the world and is the focus of this study. Evan Thompson (2007) has written an entire chapter on the phenomenology of empathy from an enactivist framework, but a consideration of empathy or altruism was beyond the scope of this study, and ultimately I determined to focus this study on the enactment of social consciousness rather than empathy or altruism, with the understanding that social consciousness is dependent on the presence of both empathy and altruism.

Consciousness. Although Schlitz and colleagues (2010) explicitly used the term “consciousness” in their ongoing research, the term itself is ill defined and under used in the larger education literatures. As Nunn (2009) stated, “A frequently ignored elephant in the room of Consciousness Studies is the looming question of what we actually mean by ‘consciousness’” (p. 5). He went on to reference other authors who have described over 40 distinguishable meanings ascribed to the term consciousness. Charles Whitehead (2010) said, “The study of consciousness in particular is one with no consensus concerning the nature of its subject, how it should be regarded, or how it might be

integrated into a scientific understanding of reality” (pp. 16-17). To make matters worse, learning theorists Davis and Sumara (2006) argued that although many psychologists, sociologists, and neurologists have defined and attempted discipline specific explanations of consciousness, it “has become increasingly clear that none of these contributions is up to the task of making sense of human consciousness of self and other-than-self” (p. ix).

To mitigate confusion and a prolonged discussion of what is meant by consciousness, for the purposes of this research, I made no claim to a wider understanding of the term *consciousness* beyond a simple conception of consciousness as synonymous to social awareness. The boundaries of my own research were aligned with a definition of social consciousness, which “denotes conscious awareness of being part of an interrelated community of others” (Schlitz et al., 2010, p. 21). I take this definition to include an evolving understanding of other’s perspectives and realities, an awareness of how personal actions may affect others, and an increasing sense of agency towards equity and responsibility.

Social, cultural and political constructions of knowledge. Learning theories are located at the psychological level of human experience, and it is unusual to study social phenomenon at the psychological level (Davis & Sumara, 2006). However, consciousness is a psychological construct and social consciousness is a psychological construct about social understandings. Nonetheless, social phenomenon is generally studied at the social, cultural, political and ecological levels, and there is strong logic in studying the development of social consciousness in female nonprofit leaders at these levels. However, my own research looks at learning related to social consciousness, so

there is equal logic in studying this dynamic at the psychological level. Fortunately, enactivism is a learning theory that takes into account multiple levels of influence from the neurological, psychological, social, cultural, and political through an analysis of the lived history of the learner (Davis & Sumara, 2006; Maturana & Varela, 1987; Varela et al., 1991). Nonetheless, Fenwick (2000, 2001) has critiqued enactivist frameworks for obscuring power relationships while acknowledging her critique as incongruent with the basic principles of enactivist theory. This argument has been addressed by other authors (Davis & Sumara, 1997), but as a delimitation to this study, I did not study the social constructions of learning in the formations of social consciousness, the way learning in social movements specifically shaped learning, or the way institutions or social, cultural and political structures shaped understandings separate from the learning expressed from my participants. To the degree society, culture, politics, institutions, economics, and ecologies influenced the learning of my participants, I investigated this as lived experience that was influential in the shaping of social consciousness. However, beyond the bounds of it being mentioned by participants, it was not investigated, nor imposed as important or essential in the interpretation of meaning related to their learning.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This review of the literature begins with an exploration of studies on social consciousness conducted by current researchers in the field. After discussing the ontological underpinnings set forth in this research and the developmental processes proposed, I posit possible challenges to the consideration of social consciousness as a developmental process. Second, I present nonprofits and their leaders as expressions of social consciousness and explore the literature regarding what is known about female nonprofit leaders, their motivations, and the critical life events that influence their decisions. Finally, I explore the learning theory enactivism and discuss the unique mechanisms this learning theory offers to make sense of the evolution of social consciousness through the lived experiences of nonprofit leaders.

Social Consciousness

Social Consciousness: An Ontological Orientation

In an ongoing research study sponsored by the Institute of Noetic Sciences, Schlitz and colleagues (2010) are attempting to understand and engage mechanisms that lead to the development of social consciousness through worldview transformations. They define worldviews as each individual's understanding of the nature of reality through their genetic tendencies, culture, geography, experiences, attitudes, values and

relationship to their environment. Schlitz and her colleagues have developed a curriculum designed to expand individual world views by increasing awareness of the relationship between perception and experience, what they are calling ‘worldview literacy.’ As they state, worldview transformation “is a fundamental shift in perspective that results in long-lasting changes in people’s sense of self, perception of relationship to the world around them and way of being” (Schlitz et al., 2010, p. 20).

The worldview literacy research project has completed five pilot programs in inner city high schools in Oakland, California, and early data collection suggests beneficial effects on students’ development. These benefits include greater capacity for self-reflection and empathy, perceiving less separation when faced with diversity, greater social and emotional intelligence, and an increased interest in making a positive contribution to school and home communities (Schlitz et al., 2010). While this early analysis shows promising behavioral shifts arising when young learners engage in the contemplation and deconstruction of their worldviews, a potentially more important result emerges. As Schlitz and colleagues noted, “...it is not only behavior that changes, but also the motivational substrate from which that behavior arises. It is not only a change in what people do, but also who they understand themselves to be at an ontological level” (p. 20). This quote embodies indicators that are important to this research. The type of understanding discussed points to a relational gestalt in which individuals see themselves as connected to others and perhaps even responsible for another’s wellbeing. This indicates a movement from individualism, apathy, and myopic self-interest to a consideration of ‘other’ as a central concern (Berman, 1997). Or as Schlitz and

colleagues stated, individuals gain “conscious awareness of being part of an interrelated community of others” (2010, p. 21). Furthermore, it implies action, whether internal or external, towards resolving this responsibility. In other words, within a very complicated milieu of culture, motivation, learning and personality, certain individuals make choices to work for the betterment of the world.

This conceptualization of social consciousness is similar to definitions forwarded by a small handful of researchers who have investigated the psychological dimensions of social consciousness. Giddings (2005) defined social consciousness as one’s “personal awareness of social injustice in their lives and in the lives of others” (p. 224). Berman (1997), however, took his definition to the level of commitment when he states that social consciousness is “the development of one’s relationship with the political and social world and one’s personal investment in the well-being of others and the planet as a central concern” (1997, p. 9). Ammentorp (2007) defined the development of social consciousness as a “process involving increasing awareness of social historical context, the ability to think abstractly about time and place, and beyond the immediate everyday conditions to understand individual experience as embedded in a broader system of social relations” (p. 39). These definitions provide a common language around the evolution of social consciousness in individuals and enable us to consider social consciousness as a distinct ontological orientation towards social justice and an awareness of self in a larger social world.

Considering Social Consciousness as a Developmental Process

Schlitz and colleagues (2010) are currently conducting research on the development of social consciousness and propose a conceptual framework with five nested levels, which emerged out of their own field observations. The *embedded* level explains how social consciousness is shaped without awareness by social, cultural and biological factors, and the *self-reflective* level indicates a dynamic process that pushes individuals beyond these embedded notions of social understandings. The third level, *engaged*, is defined as the level in which people are aware of their social environment and “mobilize an intention to contribute to the greater good in some outwardly directed way” (p. 23). The fourth level, *collaborative*, is not distinctly different from the third level with the exception of participation in collaborative processes. The fifth level, *resonant*, is defined as “a sense of essential interrelatedness with others—a field of shared experience and emergence that is felt and expressed in social groups, and that stimulates social transformations” (p. 23). This description points to a social consciousness that could seem unachievable by a large majority of the population and Loevinger (1976), using a similar description of consciousness, believed that this level of inclusive consciousness is reached by less than 1% of adults in the United States.

Another model was developed by Giddings (2005), who conceptualized the development of social consciousness through acquired, awakened or expanded positions. Individuals with an *acquired* view of reality collude in their own or other’s oppression and accept situations uncritically. An *awakened* social consciousness represents a consciousness in which one becomes aware of the process of oppression of oneself and

others. An *expanded* social consciousness represents a deepened knowledge of self, an individual's ability to choose action critically, and an acceptance of diversity and complexity (Giddings, 2005). Giddings considers the three positions as coexistent and open to exploration.

A similar three stage model for the development of a diversity mindset has been proposed in the teacher education literature. Mills and Ballantyne (2010) designed a model of teacher dispositions toward diversity based on Garmon's (2004) investigation of the critical factors necessary for altering preservice teacher's attitudes about diversity. They conceptualize a first stage of *self-awareness/self-reflectiveness*, a second stage of *openness*, and a third stage of *commitment* to social justice. These stages represent attitudes that enable movement from limited diversity acceptance to greater diversity acceptance, and reflect a similar understanding of the evolution toward social justice commitments as those presented by Giddings (2005) and Schlitz and colleagues (2010).

While I agree that social consciousness is open to developmental processes, each of these staged models is at risk of challenge by critics who see such contrived stages as unrepresentative of their history, experience, understanding, or current situation. As Fenwick (2000) stated, "Western classificatory logic embeds its knowers with the deep assumption that there is such a logic, seeking to know the differences between things, and to separate them accordingly" (p. 246). Therefore, while I recognize the contributions these researchers have made towards our understanding of social consciousness and its increased expression, they fall short of helping researchers make sense of each individual's development, expression and articulation of social consciousness (Fenwick,

2000, 2001, 2003; see also the action research of Davis & Sumara, 1997 and Sumara & Davis, 1997). If social consciousness is a highly individual interpretation of one's place and responsibilities in the world, based on myriad factors and complex relationships that shape this interpretation, understanding this phenomenon through a learning theory such as enactivism rather than developmental models may reveal a more nuanced consideration of social consciousness and its expression in the lives of nonprofit leaders.

Nonprofits: Expressions of Social Consciousness

In 2007, well-known environmental activist Paul Hawken wrote a book entitled *Blessed Unrest*, which details the breadth and influence of small, grassroots nonprofits and non-governmental organizations throughout the world. For years, Hawken researched growth in the nonprofit sector, managed a global database of constituent organizations, and tracked social movements with three basic foci: environmental activism, social justice initiatives, and indigenous culture's resistance to globalization. Originally, he estimated 30,000 environmental organizations and over 70,000 organizations focused on social justice and indigenous rights were operating globally. However, he now believes that over one million not-for-profit organizations are working towards ecological sustainability and social justice worldwide. He called this "the largest social movement in all of human history" (p. 4). However, he quickly problematizes his own use of the term *social movement* because most movements have leaders and ideologies, whereas this movement is based on ideas (not ideologies) and is "dispersed, inchoate, and fiercely independent" (p. 3). In other words, typical social movements have been shaped by

political, national, or religious ideologies with a central organizing body that shapes and communicates these beliefs. Hawken saw the current surge in nonprofits to be without a top-down ideological authority. As he stated:

It has no manifesto, or doctrine, no overriding authority to check with. It is taking shape in schoolrooms, farms, jungles, villages, companies, deserts, fisheries, slums, and...fancy New York hotel rooms. One of its distinctive features is that it is tentatively emerging as a global humanitarian movement arising from the bottom up. (p. 3)

Hawkins (2007) believed this growth in organized individuals willing to confront despair, poverty, power, and injustice represents the “most complex association of human beings ever assembled” (p. 3). He backs this claim with details of the numerous initiatives, foci, and partnerships that nonprofits are aligning with in order to help human beings redefine their relationship to the earth and each other.

While the growth of the nonprofit sector might be astonishing, women’s participation in this sector is less so. Women have a long history initiating volunteerism and charitable acts, and in the mid-19th century, the nonprofit sector emerged as an alternative power source for women struggling against oppression (Schimmel, 2011). On both the international and domestic fronts, women leaders have actively pushed nonprofit agencies towards a greater and more comprehensive focus on rights and empowerment for the marginal and oppressed. Part of this focus has been movement away from social welfare programs that maintain disempowered and inequitable states to education for empowerment. This is the classic example of teaching someone how to fish rather than giving them a fish. Gill, Warner, Weiss, and Gupta (2009) indicated that women have been major players in shaping the focus of programs that enable the disempowered to

move beyond the role of “passive beneficiary to that of the change agent, [and] a key driver of economic and social development” (p. 24). This position is supported by Kumar (2008) who presented evidence from the nonprofit sector demonstrating the increasing importance of women as major actors in the reduction of poverty and facilitation of social change.

While most female nonprofit leaders are middle and upper class (Leete, 2006), little is known about the women leaders themselves (Gill et al., 2009), their motivations to join nonprofits (Mitra, 2011), or the critical life events that influence their desire to become nonprofit leaders (Smith & Reed, 2010). One small study conducted in Kyrgyzstan on the motivations of ten nonprofit leaders indicated that these individuals “tended to be motivated by the desire to make the world a better place or do good for others, by the wish to be independent, or by the desire to actualize their leadership or creative potential” (Plakhotnikova & Kurbanova, 2008, p. 26). Another study in India by Handy, Kassam, and Ranade (2002) proposed that women’s participation and leadership in the nonprofit sector is influenced by critical life events, culture, personal characteristics and socioeconomic variables. Smith and Reed’s research into the effect of culture and life events on Appalachian women’s decisions to lead in their community organizations concludes that “future research should expand and clarify the reasons for the relationship between life experiences and leadership within national subcultures” (p. 95). In other words, what life experiences affect leadership decisions as specific to each woman’s subculture and contextual upbringing? My own research seeks to answer these questions through an understanding of the significant learning events that influenced

women to get involved in nonprofit work.

Currently, nonprofits account for 8.5% of the United States workforce, up 52% from 2001, and have always been a predominantly female workforce (Pynes, 2011); in 1989, 66.6% of the nonprofit workplace was female (Leete, 2006), increasing to 68% in 1994, and 73% in 2011 (Pynes, 2011). In nonprofit organizations, women accounted for 45% of board seats and 43% of CEOs; 83.8% of nonprofit workers are white, 98.7% are fluent in English, and 42% have a bachelor's degree or higher (Leete, 2006). Nonprofits owe their inception and continued support to philanthropists who feel that contributions of time and money are moral imperatives in tackling the social ills of our time. In Western and other technologically developed countries, up to 70% of citizens make regular charitable contributions and up to 25% regularly volunteer their time (Robbins, 2006).

Nonprofit organizations serve a variety of functions such as health services; civic, social, and fraternal organizations; education/research; religious organizations; social and legal services. The distribution of nonprofits in each sector can be seen in Table 1, as well as the changes in these distributions from 1972 to 2001. Notably, there have been sharp declines in religious organizations and civic, social and fraternal organizations coupled with an increase of 79% in social and legal services. This supports Hawken's (2007) research on the increase of organizations focused on social change and confirms a statement by Leete (2006) who claimed "changes in governmental policy in recent decades, in the United States and elsewhere, have increasingly shifted the burden of maintaining a social safety net to nonprofit workers" (p. 159).

Table 1

Distribution of Nonprofit Employment Across Organization Type in the United States

Year	Health services	Education/ research	Religious organizations	Social and legal services	Civic, social, and fraternal organizations	Arts and culture	Foundations
1972	42.2	21.1	19.0	10.2	6.1	1.9	0.3
2001	41.9	21.9	11.8	18.3	3.9	1.9	0.3

Note. Adapted from Leete (2006).

As mentioned previously, distinctions are often made in the literature between formal nonprofit leaders such as founders, board members or executive officers and volunteers. However, my research participants were chosen because of their social justice orientation and although some of them are founders and executive officers, others have shown leadership through their volunteer efforts. Data on volunteerism has been inconsistently collected, but data collected in 2000 by Leete (2006) indicated that 83.9 million or 44% of adults volunteered on average 3.6 hours per week. Among those most likely to volunteer are women, whites, married persons, those with higher education and individuals with higher income levels. Volunteering is most prominent among those aged 35 to 54; although the presence of preschool children deters volunteerism, the presence of children 6 to 12 enhances volunteerism.

A study by Caputo (1997) attempted to discern the factors associated with the likelihood that female volunteers would focus their efforts on changing social conditions. He found that higher education increased the likelihood of volunteers working to change social conditions, but being white decreased the likelihood of activist activity. Although the study did not specifically measure motivation, it did determine that locus of control, or the ability to make things happen, was a good predictor that volunteers would focus on

changing social conditions.

It is natural to assume that a positive locus of control would affect volunteer longevity and long-term nonprofit commitment, but Leete (2006) noted that “existing research virtually ignores the distinction between what first motivates volunteers and what motivates them to remain committed later” (p. 175). Furthermore, she states a critical need to better understand volunteer motivation, and in particular intrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation coupled with long term social justice commitments are closely aligned with conceptions of social consciousness, but understanding how they emerge over a lifetime and under what conditions is not understood. The next section introduces enactivism and explains how this learning theory provides an opportunity to consider learning related to social justice commitments as a relationship between lived experience and the development of social consciousness.

Enactivism

This research investigated learning as related to the development of social consciousness for nonprofit leaders and as such, requires a learning theory that accommodates an examination of learning over a lifetime and situates learning within the learner’s environment. This learning theory comes from complexity theorists Francisco Varela and Humberto Maturana and is called enactivism. Enactivism is rooted in concepts of deep ecology—concepts that see the world as an integrated whole rather than a dissociated collection (Capra, 1996). Like an ecosystem, human systems are also seen as interdependent, and learning is considered from this relational perspective. Enactivism

is based in biological metaphor and understanding. *The Tree of Knowledge: The Biological Roots of Human Understanding* by Maturana and Varela (1987) presented a learning theory based on single-cell organisms, multi-cell organisms, evolutionary theories, nervous systems, and linguistic domains through an understanding of cell organization and adaption. The two key components that are central to an enactivist understanding of learning are the way in which a learner organizes her learning and the relationship she has to her environment (Maturana & Varela, 1987). In the following section, I will review a history of enactivist theory, describe major branches within the theoretical landscape, and discuss the organization of learning in enactivist theory as it shapes the analysis of this study.

History of Enactivist Theory

Enactivism is a term coined by the late Francisco Varela in the summer of 1986 in Paris when he and Evan Thompson first began writing *The Embodied Mind*. Prior to using the term ‘enactive’ as a descriptor for the way in which individuals ‘bring forth a world’ through their interactions within it, Varela was using ‘the hermeneutic approach’ to emphasize the affiliation of his ideas with the school of hermeneutics (the study of the theory and practice of interpretation) and other theorists of embodied cognition of the time (Thompson, 2001a). Also central to Varela’s work is the scholarship of French phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Edmond Husserl who were primarily concerned with phenomena of consciousness and the systematic reflection on the structures of consciousness (Varela et al., 1991). Merleau-Ponty (1962) promoted a concept of “double embodiment,” which emphasized the connection between our

experience as a living biological body and our body as the vehicle for lived experience. This interrelationship between biological body and body as experiencer forms the basis of his phenomenological theories which suggest perception is an interpretive act that does not involve the passive reception of information, but rather the active projection of experience onto what can be perceived. In other words, “what is perceived and how it is interpreted varies according to the agent’s accumulated experiences” (Light, 2008, p. 31). Put succinctly, we do not see the world as it is, we see the world as we are.

Amidst this backdrop of phenomenological theorizing, it is helpful to recognize that Varela completed a Ph.D. in biology from Harvard and so his work creates an interesting bridge between biological science and philosophy. Perhaps that is why his ideas are so novel and why his early work with mentor and fellow biologist and cyberneticist Humberto Maturana formed the foundation of a great deal of theory in the cognitive sciences after the publication of their book *Tree of Knowledge: The Biological Roots of Understanding* in 1987. They are credited with the groundbreaking theory of autopoiesis which made major contributions to evolutionary theory. Autopoiesis is a theory of self-organizing systems (or unities) and their relationship to their environment; it literally translates as “self-producing.” As self-producing unities, the structure of the unities “couple” with the environment to enact growth or structural evolution. This theoretical strand of structural coupling and organismic evolution was coined “natural drift” and was a radical departure from Darwin’s theories of evolution that painted organisms as “de-coupled” from their environments and therefore at the mercy of evolutionary changes—hence, the term survival of the fittest (Maturana & Varela, 1987).

Branches of Enactivist Theory

Biological coupling with an environment as defined as an organism's ability to self-organize, interact, learn from, and coevolve with an environment forms a central thesis for Maturana's and Varela's theory of autopoiesis. Several years later, this theory informed a sophisticated critique of cognitive science as it forwarded new conceptions of embodied cognition in Varela's (1991) book *The Embodied Mind: Cognitive Science and the Human Experience*, coauthored with Evan Thompson and Eleanor Rosch. This work has spawned myriad bodies of research and theory in areas such as neurophenomenology (Lutz & Thompson, 2003; Thompson, 2005; Thompson & Varela, 2001), perception and consciousness (Noe, 2002; Noe & Thompson, 2004) and the embodied dimensions of cognitive science (Cosmelli, Lachaux, & Thompson, 2007). Underlying this growth of scholarship was dissatisfaction in the cognitive science community regarding the limiting and dominating modes of mental representation which depicted the mind as a sort of processing unit similar to a computer at the time of *The Embodied Mind*'s publication. The objects of the critique were twofold: (a) the mind as synonymous in function to a computer processor, and (b) the notion of mental representation as being the unquestioned "truth" in cognitive studies. However, in all fairness, the field of cognitive science was narrowly defined at this time and research questions considered what individuals did when they solved problems or sought to represent the world (Torrance, 2005). Since that time, the field has dramatically broadened to include considerations of consciousness, emotion, and "dynamic embodied interaction with the world, and...in so doing has come to be more closely in touch with every day, lived human experience"

(Torrance, 2005, p. 357).

In the two decades since *The Embodied Mind* was published, enactivism has helped place the interrelationship between experience and consciousness at the forefront of cognitive science; however, much of the literature falls within two major strands: philosophical and phenomenological considerations of what it means to be an entity with a mind and narrower considerations of how perception and perceptual experiences influence consciousness (Torrance, 2005). Within the first strand, there is an active scholarship of educators seeking to understand enactivism not as an abstract theoretical construct, but rather as an applied learning theory. Learning theorist Jerome Proulx conducted comparative analysis of enactivism against more widely recognized learning theories (2004, 2008). Sumara and Davis theorized about complexity science related to learning and conduct action research on math learning in community settings to understand the emergence of collaborative understandings (Davis, 2004; Davis & Sumara, 1997, 2006; Davis, Sumara, & Luce-Kapler, 2008; Sumara & Davis, 1997). Adult educator Tara Fenwick (2000, 2001, 2003) has been deconstructing and expanding adult education conceptions of experiential learning and considering experiential learning through embodied and enactivist lenses. Furthermore, several applied scholars are pushing boundaries by considering enactivism as more than a theoretical lens, but rather as an actual approach to research in which researcher and researched coemerge and become a systematic part of the research process (Niessen, Abma, Widdershoven, van der Vleuten, & Akkerman, 2008; Sumara & Davis, 1997).

Researchers are using enactivism to inform all kinds of research, from brain

scans, to math education, to nursing practice and the research process itself and central to this research is understanding of organismic structures and the way in which an organism structurally couples and coemerges with an environment. The term coemergence was introduced by Varela and colleagues (1991) but similar terms such as coevolution (Bateson, 1979) and mutual specification (Maturana & Varela, 1987) have been used to describe a learner's relationship to their environment. To comprehend how a learner coemerges with their environment, it is helpful to gain a greater understanding of how enactivism conceptualizes the organization of learning.

Organization of Learning

Maturana and Varela (1987) claimed as their starting point “the awareness that all knowing is an action by the knower, that is, that all knowing depends on the structure of the knower” (p. 34). If this is true and knowledge depends on the structure of the knower, then the next logical question should be, “what is the structure of the knower?” From an enactivist point of view, the structure of the knower is best described as *autopoietic*, or self-producing. Enactivists are clear that the subjects they study are phenomenon described as living, adaptive systems such as cells, biospheres, individuals, species, cultures or classrooms, and all living systems are characterized as self-producing or autopoietic. An autopoietic system is a unity that is easily distinguishable from its surrounding environment, but is “dynamically related in a network of ongoing interactions” that continually produce and maintain itself (Maturana & Varela, 1998, p. 44). If this seems confusing, consider the healing process. When a child cuts its finger, the cells in the finger interact in a way to knit and heal the wound with no external

direction, just the enabling factors of cleaning and bandages. From a cognitive perspective, learning occurs such that an individual is self-producing or put another way, maintains viability. Maintaining viability as a living system, or adaptation, is the second important component of enactivism to be considered.

Adaptive systems can change their structures in response to internal or external pressures or stimulus (Davis, 2004). Because adaptive systems embody their history in their structure, they are seen as evolving. “Structure in this sense is both caused and accidental, both familiar and unique, both complete and in process” (Davis & Sumara, 2006, p. 13). However, an important point to remember is that it is *not* the environmental stimulus that creates changes to the structure. Rather, it is the nature of the structure that determines the changes that happen, or if change happens at all. As Proulx (2004) stated, “You get triggered by what you CAN get triggered by” (p. 115). In other words, the environment is not the place where decisions arise, but it is through an individual’s interaction with an environment that her “internal dynamics can recognize potential triggers in it and get triggered by them. Learning is not determined by the environment, but it depends on it” (Proulx, 2004, p. 117).

This ability or inability of a system to respond, or be triggered, by an environment is shaped by the system’s organization (identity) and represents the limits of what action an entity can take in its environment and what it can come to know (Maturana & Varela, 1987). Thus, it is not the environment that determines learning, but the internal structure of the individual. Furthermore, each person’s experiences are best understood and interpreted through an understanding of their ontogeny, or historical shifts in structural

change. Enactivism claims that the internal organization of a structure precludes understanding; however, the reverse is true as well. When there is *structural coupling* between the biological and experiential structures because something from the environment “triggered” something in the individual, and her structural organization “allowed” this trigger, learning results (Davis et al., 2008; Maturana & Varela, 1987).

Structural coupling is defined as the engagement of two or more systems, such as a human being, a culture, or a specific environment that provides certain levels of mutual cohesion and development potential (Maturana & Varela, 1987). As long as the system and the environmental medium (which could contain other autopoietic systems) remain viable in their interaction, they are said to be structurally coupled and they coemerge. It is important to understand that coemergence does not mean that the system (individual) and the environmental medium (for example, classroom) are becoming more fully adapted to each other. All that is asserted is that their structures allow them to interact and *affect* each other.

This interactivity with environment, or coemergence, is unique because of its biological emphasis on *phylogeny*, or evolutionary development and history. Thus we move beyond a consideration of present-day interactions with one’s environment, to a consideration of how evolution within an environment (i.e., history) shapes the present. In other words, the evolution of the human species is grounded in its historical interaction with its environment, just as each individual’s evolution is grounded in a history of interactions with their environment. Proulx (2008) asserted that one’s history either enables or limits interactions with environment, and articulates this dynamic when he

writes, “I—my structure—allow the physical world to be brought forth. If these attributes of the physical world are outside my structure, outside of my capacity to make sense of them, I cannot distinguish them and cannot perceive them. In other words, they cannot ‘trigger’ anything in me” (p. 21). This quote offers some insight into why some individuals commit to social action and others do not. Because individuals coemerge within their environment, they are both shaped by this environment and shape and direct it in return. One might assert that the lived experience of individuals (their phylogenic environment) enacts their social consciousness. Conversely, their social consciousness may enact changes in this environment through their actions.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Pilot Study

In the fall of 2009, I met two female nonprofit leaders from Kolkata who were third-generation Bengali women operating a nonprofit in the rural areas of north-eastern India. Their organization has been running for over 35 years and serves approximately 250 villages in the areas of community education, health and hygiene, women's empowerment, legal advocacy, water resource installation and maintenance, vocational training, and education for sustainable agriculture. I perceived their programs to be respected and making movement towards educational outcomes, despite the lack of funding and overwhelming scope of social problems.

During the women's stay in the United States, we spent a great deal of time discussing their organization, family, culture and background. From these conversations I gained a greater understanding of their grassroots programs as well as the seemingly insurmountable challenges they face in trying to transform the social and economic landscape of women in their country. They work long hours and sleep little as they push to secure the potential of each woman and child in the villages they serve. Getting to know them personally, I learned that they came from a prestigious family in Kolkata and each of them had achieved high levels of education. However, I could never fully understand what drove them. What in their life made them commit to this path despite education and opportunity that could lure them into more comfortable ventures? I wanted

to better understand the experiences that led three generations of privileged women to sacrifice their time and energy in the fight to empower others.

In March of 2010, I traveled to India to conduct a research project exploring each woman's life learning as it impacted their empowerment and the decision to fight for the empowerment of others. My research served as a pilot study for this dissertation.

While preparing for my pilot study in India, an additional consideration regarding the type of research I wanted to conduct came into focus. Because the population for my pilot study was so small (three women), and the focus of my inquiry was on learning over a lifetime, I decided to use life history as my research method. I knew little about life history, so I went to the library to check out some books and while I was in the qualitative methods section of our library, my eyes were drawn to the spine of a book with the words, *Art Meets Method* by Patricia Leavy (2009). As an artist I was intrigued, but I had no idea why the book was in the qualitative methods section of the library. On a whim, I checked it out with other books on life history, put it in the bottom of my bag and forgot about it for several days. When I pulled it out later, it was with mild curiosity rather than academic interest that I considered the first few pages. However, as I began to read, a dawning realization began to sink in. Patricia Leavy was talking about using art as an *actual research method*! I had never heard of such a thing.

As I read Leavy's book, a heaviness lifted from my heart and my spirit became enthused with the possibility of using art to explore meaning and understanding in new and unique ways. Although artists often break art down into objective understandings such as color theory, composition, and medium-specific techniques, as a former

professional artist, my experiences had taught me that making art transcends rational understandings. Beyond the general skills and knowledge necessary to make something, there exists a soulful, mysterious and deeply personal realm of creativity and expression. When I returned to graduate school, I assumed that I would need to shelve my artistic self until I finished with my studies. I believed this because the focus of my studies was education, not art and not even art education. It had never occurred to me, nor had I ever heard of someone using art as data, as a method for extracting data, or as a mode of data representation. In learning about arts-based research, I felt as if I could take my “other” self, my hidden “art-self” off the shelf and invite her to my academic party. I had kept her tucked away because I did not think she would be taken seriously and I did not want to risk damaging an essential part of myself that was so vital...so authentic...so alive, through academic critique and dismissal. However, as I explored the innovative and authoritative voices of arts-based researchers, I realized that not only did my artist-self have a place at the academic party; she was in fact the honored guest.

I presented my pilot study at the Adult Education Research Conference in Toronto in the summer of 2011 (Seymour, 2011). I used empowerment theory (Handy & Kassam, 2004; Malhotra, Schuler, & Boender, 2002; Perkins & Zimmerman, 1995), to analyze the data, but there were significant limitations in using empowerment theory because it treated empowerment as separate from learning constructs, which in turn did not make sense of the complexity of each woman’s learning related to their empowerment. The data clearly indicated that learning related to empowerment was influenced by their Indian culture and the larger ecological/global dynamics that were affecting modern

India. It was also clear that each woman's family circle and immediate social circle heavily influenced their empowerment and possibilities for empowerment learning. Finally, it was obvious that each woman responded to challenging circumstances with psychological orientations that enabled learning. In the end, I came to believe that empowerment theories fell short in their ability to make sense of multidimensional and highly contextual forms of empowerment related to learning that might lead to personal commitments such as working for social justice. Thus, my current research altered the theoretical lens through which I considered the evolution of social consciousness. However, I found arts-based research to be such a compelling research method to investigate both personal meaning and lived history; I maintained it as a central and important component of this research project.

Life History Collage Research Approach

Despite the longstanding predominance and ontological hegemony of positivist and post-positivist research methodologies in the social sciences, qualitative methods have been gaining acceptance, legitimacy and complexity over the past two decades (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Guba & Lincoln, 2005). Life history and other forms of narrative inquiry have received particular attention and support as they strive to open the aperture for studies that focus on the personal as political, the consideration of voices that often go unheard, and the possibilities of research as a form of empowerment (Atkinsen, 2004; Dhunpath, 2000; Goodley, 1996; Perks & Thomson, 2002). It has even been proposed that life history research is counterculture to traditional methods of inquiry

(Dhunpath, 2000), and some authors go so far as to claim that life history narratives are the *only* method of inquiry that authentically seek to understand the intersection of human motivations and experiences within their lived contexts (Alheit, 2005; Cole & Knowles, 2001; Dhunpath, 2000).

Another form of qualitative inquiry that seeks to disrupt traditional narratives and accepted ways of knowing is arts-based research (Barone & Eisner, 2006; Cahnmann-Taylor & Siegesmund, 2008; Coles & Knowles, 2008; Cole, Neilsen, Knowles, & Luciani, 2004; Leavy, 2009; McNiff, 2008). Arts-based research can be defined as “the systematic use of the artistic process, the actual making of artistic expressions in all of the different forms of the arts, as a primary way of understanding and examining experience by both researchers and the people that they involve in their studies” (McNiff, 2008, p. 29). Artistic ways of understanding and examining experience ask the participants, researcher and research audience to look beyond and beneath superficial representations to understandings and expressions that are complex, subjective, emotive and even spiritual. The artistic is less mental than it is visceral and embodied, thus a consideration of arts-based research requires us to loosen the suppositions and structures we place on “good” research and consider ways of knowing from multiple and new sources. This does not imply knowing more, but rather knowing differently (Davis & Sumara, 2006).

It is with this motivation in mind that I developed a form of life history research based on the production and exploration of collage as the entry point into life history narrative. This method has been tried by other researchers (Hattingh & de Kock, 2008; McIntyre, 2000; Promislow, 2005; Vaughn, 2005), but a full discussion of its attributes

and potential advantages is lacking in the arts-based research literature, although its parent concept (visual arts based inquiry) has an active and enthusiastic scholarship (Cahnmann-Taylor & Siegesmund, 2008; Leavy, 2009).

Because life history collage is a relatively novel method of qualitative inquiry, this chapter explores the qualities, methodological issues and potential benefits of life history collage through an overview of its two influencing methods: life history and arts-based research. To ground and clarify important points influencing my research design, I first define life history and attempt to paint a picture of its ontological relevance. Then I turn my attention to describing the general position and attributes of arts-based research. The chapter concludes with an introduction to visual arts-based research and an exploration of collage as a research strategy.

Glesne (2006) indicated three purposes for the use of life history research: to biographically represent an individual's life, to create a cultural portrayal of a family, and to represent perceptions and effects of particular life events. The focus of my research falls within the third category, and while I will seek completeness in creating a narrative of my participant's lives, my research using life history method will explicitly pursue the meaning of events and experiences that have influenced the evolution of participants' social consciousness.

Janesick (2010) believed that the power of life history research "resides in the meaning made of the storytelling and what we learn from the stories" (p. 1). These *meanings* and *learnings* are central to life history projects as participants strive to articulate the meanings they have produced related to themselves and their social

frameworks (Antikainen, 1998), and researchers seek to understand these learnings as social texts (Munchmore, 1999). As Dhunpath (2000) noted, “Biographies and other forms of life writing enables the reconstruction and interpretation of subjectively meaningful features and critical episodes of a teacher educator’s life, allowing us to see the unities, continuities, and discontinuities, images and rhythms” (p. 545). Thus, the researcher seeks to understand life events as described by their participants, but more importantly the *meaning* ascribed to these events. Seeking to understand the meanings that individuals place on events gives us an awareness of their identity and agency, as well as insight into how humans experience the world (Alheit, 2005; Biesta et al., 2005; Dhunpath, 2000; Salling Olesen, 2000). However, not all life events are equally meaningful or informative for the life history researcher. While there is a natural filtering mechanism that takes place in life story narration, because the participant determines what will or will not be told, the life history researcher must consider which of these life events are significant.

Antikainen (1998) defined significant learning experiences as “those [experiences] which appeared to guide the interviewee’s life course, or to have changed or strengthened his or her identity” (p. 218). This definition has two components. The first component refers to an experience that stands out in one’s memory and is significant enough to affect the course of one’s life; the second component indicates a change or strengthening of identity. These experiences are uniquely personal and only we can know which life experiences qualify as significant because they stand out in our minds as having altered our sense of identity. Since my own research investigates the evolution of

social consciousness, uncovering and understanding these significant learning experiences are of the utmost importance. While a traditional approach to life history, based on researcher constructed questions and interviews, might reveal these experiences and the meanings that are attached to them, the creation of art as an entry point into life history enables participants to choose for themselves which experiences are important. Furthermore, the artwork has the potential to express deeper and more nuanced meanings about these experiences. In the next section of this chapter, I will review the literature on arts-based research methods and build a case for including collage making as an entry point into life history research.

Arts-Based Research Methods

Leavy (2009) defined arts-based research practices as “a set of methodological tools used by qualitative researchers across the disciplines during all phases of social research, including data collection, analysis, interpretation, and representation” (p. 2). McNiff (2008) more narrowly defined art-based research as “the systematic use of the artistic processes, the actual making of artistic expressions in all the different forms of the arts, as a primary way of understanding and examining experience by both researcher and the people that they involve in their studies” (p. 29). He went on to delineate this form of research from *arts-informed* research, in which “the arts may play a significant role but are essentially used as data for investigations that take place within academic disciplines that utilize more traditional scientific, verbal, and mathematic descriptions and analyses of phenomena” (McNiff, 2008, p. 29). Because McNiff provided a concise definition of

arts-based research as delineated from arts-informed research and as my own proposed research falls within the category of arts-informed research, I align my research framework with his definition. However, a brief consideration of the historical movements in *arts-based* research, an explanation of its subgenres, and an awareness of the important issues affecting the field is helpful in providing a framework of legitimacy for readers new to these concepts.

Over the past ten to fifteen years, there has been an “explosion of arts-based inquiry” in the social sciences (Mullen, 2003, p. 166). There are many reasons why researchers have migrated to the exploratory and emerging field of arts-based research, not the least of which is the quest for unique forms of representation and meaning (Loock, Myburgh, & Poggenpoel, 2003). In their chapter in *The Handbook of Arts in Qualitative Research*, Cole and Knowles (2008) discussed their dissatisfaction and disillusionment with the “language of the academy and all it symbolized” (p. 57) and their movement within the late 1980s to push against dominant paradigms and to infuse their research with artistic processes and representational forms. They were encouraged in these efforts by Elliot Eisner who gave a Presidential Address to the 1993 Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association in which he came out in strong support of using art and artistic processes to inform our understandings of education and human development (Cole & Knowles, 2008). Reflecting on this time in history, Eisner (2008) confided that he was curious about the possibility of “an approach to educational research that would rely upon the imaginative and expressive crafting of a form in ways that enlarged our understanding of what was going on,...[to use] art forms

to reveal the features that mattered educationally” (p. 18). Thus, Eisner, Cole and Knowles epitomize the reasons why Leavy (2009) believed researchers embrace arts-based approaches: because they “come to these methods as a way of better addressing research questions...[or] openly long to merge their scholar-self with their artist-self” (p. 1).

During the last decade of the previous century, consideration of artistic practices coalesced with the postmodern turn emerging in social science research and seeded the origins of “blurred genres,” “scholARTistry,” and “a/r/tography” (Cole & Knowles, 2008). “Blurred genres,” as the name implies, is explicitly ill-defined and represents a movement among researchers to combine methods from art and science, and to stretch existing methodologies, such as ethnography, in new and interesting ways. Although “blurred genres” explore the combination of art with existing research methods, “scholARTistry” directly promotes questions of quality and the production of “arts-based forms of inquiry that matter, especially in a political climate insistent upon definitive, unambiguous, generalizable answers” (Cahnmann-Taylor, 2008, p. 12). Thus, scholARTists pursue superiority in hybrid forms for the sake of art scholarship, work to refine critical sensibilities, push to establish criteria for excellence, and seek to discover aesthetic forms helpful to educational inquiry.

A/r/tographical work (Irwin & Springgay, 2008; Sinner, 2008; Smith, 2009) is a specific category of art-based research practice within educational research. A/r/t is a metaphor for artist-researcher-teacher and the three roles are integrated to create a “third space” (Pinar as cited by Leavy, 2009, p. 3) for the exploration and expression of

identity. This work emerged out of the University of British Columbia by a group of faculty (Anita Sinner, Carl Leggo, Rita Irwin, Peter Gouzouasis, and Kit Grauer) who define and research a specific genre of arts-based inquiry that builds on auto-ethnographic approaches to integrate, explore and express the relationships between the roles of artist/researcher/teacher (Leavy, 2009; Smith, 2009).

Thus far, I have defined and explored the larger category of arts-based research, and the subgenres emerging within the field. This is a complex and growing field of research that defies simple or easy definitions. However, having provided a general conception of the field and some of the issues considered in arts-based research, I will now turn my attention to explaining arts-informed research, and the particular advantages associated with this method.

Arts-Informed Research

In conceptualizing my own research project and immersing myself in the arts-based research literature, I quickly became concerned about “my place” in the arts-based research movement. While I read studies of performance art with fascinated interest and marveled at how departments of education sponsored student art exhibits that evoked complex understandings of student experience, I questioned how my own study could be conceptualized as arts based. I was not planning on performing the data or creating an art form (other than narrative) to represent the data. Rather, I was asking my participants to create data in the form of personal art collages and describe the art to me, as well as the meanings embedded in the art, through a series of interviews. In other words, my own

research considered art as a gateway rather than a centerpiece.

It was not until I stumbled upon the work of Ardra Cole and Gary Knowles, who founded the Center for Arts Informed Research in April of 2009 at the University of Ontario that I was able to fully articulate the difference between what I was proposing and what many in the field of arts-based research were doing. As Cole and Knowles (2008) wrote:

Arts-informed research is a mode and form of qualitative research in the social sciences that is influenced by, but not based in, the arts broadly conceived. The central purposes of arts-informed research are to enhance understanding of the human condition through alternative (to conventional) processes and representational forms of inquiry, and to reach multiple audiences by making scholarship more accessible. (p. 25)

To clarify, arts-informed research may use art as data that will be analyzed in more traditional qualitative methods. Like arts-based research, it may also use art to represent data such as theatrical performance or photo collage. However, it differs from arts-based research in its intent, which is not to reify academic notions of art, but rather to disrupt them and use art as a mechanism of connection. Cole and Knowles (2008) stated:

Arts-informed research is part of a broader commitment to shift the dominant paradigmatic view that keeps the academy and community separated...to connect the work of the academy with the life and lives of communities through research that is accessible, evocative, embodied, empathic and provocative. (p. 60)

In other words, the important questions in arts-informed research do not revolve around aesthetic quality or artistic integrity, but rather “social responsibility and epistemological equity” (Cole & Knowles, 2008, p. 62), regardless of how or to what degree art is used in the research project.

According to this argument, the subtle and often constructed divisions between

academic notions of art and aesthetics are the dominant influences in arts-based research, whereas arts-informed research represents art for the people, art for exploration, and art for healing. Although understanding the ontological differences between “high art” and “low art” is helpful in conceptualizing some of the issues facing arts-based research scholars, how research projects align and define themselves is highly contextual and sometimes fluid. I make this point because perceptions of art are often based on aesthetics and artistic ability. These are the same concerns that arts-based researchers consider. However, arts-informed researchers are less concerned with product than they are with process. Thus, concerns with artistic quality and representation are sidelined while questions of artistic process and meaning are foregrounded.

Ultimately the reflective nature of arts-informed inquiry is meant “to enhance the direction and breadth of data representation” in qualitative studies (Sinner, 2008, p. 256). Those that work with art understand its transformative nature and its potential to address questions differently than through traditional methods of inquiry (Leavy, 2009). If a researcher is willing to embrace creative and intuitive processes and have art influence their research design, they may find that art-informed inquiry is “capable of yielding outcomes [and] taking researchers in directions the sciences cannot go” (Rolling, 2010, p. 110). It may also “enhance perspectives” while enabling “new ways of viewing educational phenomena,” and “entertain questions about [education] that might have otherwise been left unasked” (Barone & Eisner, 2006, p. 96).

The purpose of this section was to clarify the philosophical underpinnings of arts-informed research and to paint a broad picture of its potential benefits and unique

ontology. The next section will briefly discuss visual art as a subcategory of arts-informed research and consider collage as a data generating method.

Visual Art and Collage

Most are familiar with the saying “a picture is worth a thousand words,” and yet visual art representation in research is a fairly new phenomenon. That is not to say that researchers have not relied on graphs, charts, and maps to convey their messages, but *art* representation is still an emerging field. Knowles, Luciani, Cole, and Nielsen’s book, *The Art of Visual Inquiry* (2007), is a collection of visual based research projects and “a witness to a changing practice and dissatisfaction with conventional forms of research” (p. ix). This trend towards visual inquiry and representation has been encouraged by a “postmodern critique of the quest for a single truth and by the awareness of the hegemony that exists in written forms of text that privilege the powerful” (Butler-Kisber, 2007, p. 265). Thus, visual art inquiry emerges on the qualitative research scene as a robust, introspective, engaging and contextual research strategy.

While arts-based and arts-informed research methods include performance, literary and visual arts, the subcategory of visual art refers to painting, drawing, cartoons, graffiti, maps, diagrams, signs, symbols, computer generated art, photography, mixed media, collage, textile arts, sculpture, installation art, and new media including film or video (Knowles et al., 2007; Weber, 2008). While the attention that researchers give to the visual arts varies greatly from research project to research project, the ultimate use of visual images in social science research is to understand and communicate aspects of the

human condition (Knowles et al., 2007). Visual art's ability to extract or point to complex and holistic human processes rests in its visual, rather than verbal, nature because "form mediates understanding and can qualitatively alter how we see things in the world" (Butler-Kisber, 2007, p. 266). The visual nature engages our senses, but because the visual is symbolic, it also raises the questions of "what does this mean" and perhaps more importantly for researchers, "*How* does this mean?" (Weber, 2008). The question, "How does this mean?" investigates the ways in which visual art communicates meaning. As Weber stated, the "ability of images to convey multiple messages, to pose questions, and to point to both abstract and concrete thoughts in so economical a fashion, makes image based media a highly appropriate form for the communication of academic knowledge" (p. 43). Furthermore, visual art challenges assumptions and easy understandings, forcing us to push against our meaning boundaries and to ask questions about ourselves, our traditions and institutions (Butler-Kisber, 2007). To specifically consider the benefits of visual art in research, Weber (2008) proposed 10 good reasons.

1. Images can be used to capture the ineffable, the hard-to put into words.
2. Images can make us pay attention to things in new ways.
3. Images are likely to be memorable.
4. Images can be used to communicate more holistically, incorporating multiple layer stories or questions.
5. Images can enhance empathic understanding and generalizability².
6. Through metaphor and symbol, artistic images can carry theory elegantly and eloquently.
7. Images encourage embodied knowledge.
8. Images can be more accessible than most forms of academic discourse.
9. Images can facilitate reflexivity in research design.
10. Images provoke action for social justice. (pp. 44-46)

This list captures my own desires and rationale behind using visual art in research.

²For a detailed account of the controversial conversation surrounding generalizability in arts-based research, I recommend Eisner (2008), Barone and Eisner (2006), and Leavy (2009).

I believe that having participants make visual art to represent significant learning related to the development of their social consciousness will create richer and more meaningful descriptions of these events.

Asking research participants to make art is referred to as a *visual arts-based participatory method* (Leavy, 2009), and involves research participants in creating art that either serves as data, represents data or both (Cahnmann-Taylor & Siegesmund, 2008). Participatory projects often involve non-artists, so aesthetic considerations are minimized in order to open avenues of creativity to participants who lack artistic training or compunction. Collage, a versatile art form, that accommodates multiple texts and visuals in a single work, is particularly helpful for novice or non-artists because it requires no skill or training. The word *collage* is derived from the French term *coller*, meaning “to stick” and refers to a genre of art in which photographs (personal or commercial), text, and found objects are cut up and pasted to a background surface (Butler-Kisber, 2007). Collage is a “readily accessible form of creative visualization and imaging” (Dudek & Cote as cited in Davis & Butler-Kisber, 1999, p. 3), and as such has gained attention from creativity researchers. Furthermore, it has been proposed as a model for “borderlands epistemology”: one that values multiple distinctive understandings and deliberately incorporates non-dominant forms of knowing (Promislow, 2005; Vaughn, 2005).

The point of the collage is to prioritize, situate and illuminate meaning through the expression of art (Leavy, 2009; Looock et al., 2003). Life history collage requires that a person choose what experiences will be collaged and what experiences will not—this

prioritizes the life events as significant. Because I asked my participants to collage along a timeline, the events are situated by the nature of the page/age structure, and they are illuminated by the images and words chosen to express each event. During the making of life history collages, participants may create the collage time-line in whatever way they choose, jumping back and forth in time to collage memories as they emerge or as they find appropriate images or objects. Although the creator of a collage may appear to choose images and materials randomly, participants work intuitively, choosing visual fragments, placing them, rearranging them, and finally committing to a representation by attaching them to background material. While this seems random and without purpose, a closer analysis reveals “mechanisms of metaphor, analogy, and allusion at work—processes which are well-known to elicit new awareness of hidden relationships and patterns, which may lead to their articulation” (Davis & Butler-Kisber, 1999, p. 4). In fact, the random and unplanned nature of collage is its greatest strength. Participant’s may consciously choose their own materials to include in a collage, such as family photographs and memorabilia, but the placement of these materials and the addition of other materials emerges in the moment, with little conscious planning or thought. In fact, “it is this reduction in conscious control over what is being presented that contributes to greater levels of expressions and in turn, greater areas for examination and subsequent clarification” (Williams as cited by Butler-Kisber, 2007, p. 269).

This section of the chapter has provided a rationale for the use of life history collage in the exploration of social consciousness. By exploring the different motivations of oral and life historians, we see that many are interested in exploring the contextual

lived experience of their participants. Cole and Knowles (2008) believed that arts-informed researchers *are* life historians due to the ways in which they seek to foreground personal experience and meaning within the lived, historical moment. I sought to clarify this position and argue that not only do the arts offer a valid entry into life history analysis, but also “give us insights that inform us in the special ways that artistically rendered forms make possible” (Cole & Knowles, 2008, p. 58). Combining visual art collage with more traditional life history interviews, I arrived at life stories that are layered with meaning and context, in which participant’s art work contributed to an understanding of learning related to social consciousness in rich, meaningful, and unexpected ways. After all, a picture **is** worth a thousand words.

Research Mechanics and Methodological Findings

Positionality Regarding Methods

For my research project I purposefully chose participants who are white, female nonprofit leaders, born and raised in the United States and who have at least a bachelor’s degree. In considering the demographics presented in Chapter II, it is clear that this is normative criteria for individuals who work and/or volunteer in the nonprofit sector. I also focused on this demographic because my pilot study in India helped me recognize the challenges of researching outside one’s cultural and socio/economic situation.

Although many researchers do an admirable job crossing social, culture, and economic boundaries, I chose to position myself as a “cultural insider” (Foley, 1998; Marx, 2006). Furthermore, I am sensitive to issues of representation in qualitative studies (Denzin &

Lincoln, 2005) and wished to study a population I could relate to, and something with which I have experience.

I have personal experience in the nonprofit sector because in early 2010, my husband and I started a nonprofit 501 3c corporation to assist the organization we befriended in West Bengal, India. Although the Indian organization has sustained nonprofit status for over thirty-five years in West Bengal, having nonprofit status in the United States enables them to extend their fundraising and marketing efforts. My husband files the appropriate paperwork to maintain legal nonprofit status and works on marketing efforts. I built and maintain the website for the organization, support nonprofit partners who assist in fundraising, and create fair trade opportunities for the artisans who create textiles through the organization's vocational training programs.

I think it is fair to say that my husband and I started the nonprofit with romantic notions of "making a difference." "Making a difference" is a term you hear a lot when talking to individuals who work in nonprofits—it is almost a rallying cry. In my opinion, behind this rallying cry lies a psychic wail. It is the wail of individuals confused by an unfair world full of pain and suffering. It is the wail of Western women dieting to lose a few pounds and lifting their heads to see the hunger of women and children half-way across the world. It is the wail of a woman beaten, raped and tortured without legal protection or redress. It is the wail of ignorance, poverty and limitation. Thus, amidst this cacophony of unfairness and despair, some of us in a position of power and privilege attempt to 'make a difference.' In truth, I believe our attempts to make a difference mask deeper questions of meaning, connection, and purpose. I know that prior to traveling to

India; I was searching for a “cause,” something I could do that would bring me a greater sense of connection to the world and infuse my life with meaningful action. In this, I recognize a level of selfishness in my motivations. However, I have experienced that selfishness in service to others feels better than selfishness in service to self.

Despite an inner sense of purpose and meaning attached to my nonprofit efforts, I quickly realized that our endeavors towards making a difference were microscopic at best, and most likely negligible. Changing social systems that perpetuate poverty, patriarchy and lack of opportunity require a lot of resources and take a very long time. Nonetheless, the women in India asked us to start a nonprofit for them in the United States and so we complied. We used savings to pay for my husband to complete a professional certificate at the University of Utah in nonprofit leadership, so that he would have the expertise necessary to manage the legal documents. We feel constant tension between our perceived need to give more time and resources to the nonprofit and the realities of raising two children, managing a home, and working full-time jobs while I complete a doctorate degree and my husband completes a master’s degree.

I recognize that my own nonprofit efforts are a lame attempt to assuage the guilt I feel for living a privileged life while so many suffer, and for the embarrassment I sometimes feel at being a citizen of a country that often enforces hegemonic political and economic policies. My husband’s and my own reasons for getting involved in the nonprofit world were influenced by our desire to learn new skills and have new experiences almost as much as our desire to “help” others. Thus, I recognize that the choices and motivations for getting involved in nonprofit work are complicated and I

have done my best to explore this complicated terrain while interrogating my participant's life histories.

My position is one of "sister researcher" in which I explore the lives of women similar to myself in background, education, race, socio/economic status, and social justice orientation. All of us are active (to varying degrees) in nonprofit work, volunteerism and activism. It was always my intention to treat these women's lives with the care and respect they deserve, all the while trying to come to a deeper understanding of the lived experiences that influenced their decisions, life paths and social consciousness. As revealed below and in subsequent chapters, my participants trusted me with confidences, vulnerabilities, confessions of guilt and confusion, and a deep level of life reflection. I made every precaution to honor the relationship of trust that was forged between me and my participants and to consider their stories in as measured a fashion as possible. For example, during the interview process, when discussions become emotional or difficult, I always asked if the participant wished to continue, and offered to end the interview if they wished not to continue. This did occur, but on several occasions, the interviewee took several minutes to become composed and I redirected the interview to a more comfortable topic.

After I transcribed the interviews, I sent a copy to each participant and asked them to verify all data and inherent meanings as a form of member checking. Participants made corrections on the transcripts to varying degrees and I used the corrected transcripts to construct the life narratives, what I am calling textual collages. When I sent the transcriptions, I explained that their edited transcripts would be distilled into a concise

narrative over which they would have final editing authority, and I wanted to make sure that each participant ‘owned’ both the transcriptions and the final narrative. Finally, I took field notes during the interviews and checked dates and details against these field notes for clarity and historical cohesion.

Participant Selection

My research considers the significant learning of female nonprofit leaders and how this learning influenced the development of their social consciousness. In nonprofit literature, distinctions have been made between volunteers and activists (Caputo, 1997), and a further distinction for my research could be made with regards to the role of leader. In my opinion, it was not necessary to limit research participants to a single category of volunteer, activist, board member, president or funder, because the focus of my study was on learning related to the development of social consciousness rather than on the influence of specific roles and responsibilities. Therefore, for the purposes of this study, leaders were defined as individuals who influence a group of people towards the achievement of a goal; I sought individuals that champion ideas rather than hold a formal title or position of responsibility, although they are generally not mutually exclusive.

I specifically looked for women who deeply believed in the goals of their organization, worked to influence others towards those goals, and underwent a certain degree of personal sacrifice in their commitment to their organization. I assumed that any significant learning related to social consciousness that was tied to specific roles and responsibilities of nonprofit work would emerge during data collection. I did not want to limit my participants by their titles, only their social consciousness. Although I did not

limit the concept of leadership to executive directors, founders, or board members, three of my four participants fit this category at the time of research. All of my participants were either unpaid or paid very little for their efforts, and all of them have a minimum of twenty years of nonprofit volunteerism and/or leadership.

I made a further assumption that individuals working with a nonprofit organization focused on social justice had developed some level of social consciousness. For the purposes of my research, social justice is defined as an orientation towards creating an egalitarian society based on the principles of equality and solidarity, an understanding and valuing of human rights, and recognition of the dignity of every human being. Thus, leaders from nonprofits that serve minorities, the poor, or focus on environmental causes directly related to human well-being were considered for this study. Leaders from nonprofits that serve a civic function not directly related to social justice, such as museums, churches or community centers were not considered for this study. Although many religiously orientated nonprofits might have a social justice orientation, I specifically excluded leaders from these organizations from my study. The rationale for this exclusion is as follows:

At the beginning of Chapter II, I referenced Hawken's (2007) belief that the surge in nonprofits, over the last decade or so, is not ideologically driven. I realize that ideas lead to ideologies, but when an ideology becomes established within a central authority, it runs the risk of becoming dogmatic and dictatorial. Therefore, I purposely sought participants that I believed had evolved their social consciousness through an engaged questioning and learning rather than an adaptation of an ideological narrative

with a central leadership and authority. This naturally precluded me from researching subjects working in nonprofits with overt religious or political affiliations. This does not mean that my participants were apolitical or unreligious—quite the contrary. Participants expressed influences from religious organizations as well as political affiliations.

However, in avoiding researching nonprofit leaders from religious or political organizations, regardless of their focus on social justice, I feel I was able to explore each woman's personal learning related to social consciousness more deeply, rather than learning related to the adaption of political and religious narratives. It also became more apparent, and will be described in subsequent chapters, how each woman pushed against or adapted aspects of these narratives and how they shaped their commitments to more secular pursuits. Thus, the population I considered for this research was white educated females, born and raised in America, working with nonprofits (either paid or voluntary) that had a strong social justice focus, but that did not have overt religious or political affiliation.

Sample Selection

Originally, I assumed that I would have to solicit possible research subjects through the nonprofit leadership programs through the University of Utah or through Westminster College's Master of Community Leadership program. Both programs serve current and potential nonprofit leaders throughout the greater Salt Lake City area. However, because of my participation in nonprofit events in Salt Lake City, I initially identified a few women who might be interested in participating in this study. I had met these women through personal and professional networks, book clubs with a social

justice focus, education experiences at Westminster College and through community fundraising events. Originally, I was uncertain if researching individuals I knew personally and professionally would be a good idea. I had concerns that I would be too close to the participants or that the research conversations would overlap into personal or professional conversations. However, after reading Ardra Cole's and Gary Knowles' (2001) excellent book on life history research, *Lives in Context: The Art of Life History Research*, which foregrounds the personal and intimate relationships necessary for effective life history research, I realized that this initial relationship with my potential participants was beneficial. We already had a certain regard for each other. We had already discussed issues of social justice in book clubs and at social events. I knew something of the women's work and felt that they fit the criteria for which I was looking. Therefore, I emailed all four women with the details of my research, including all pertinent IRB documents, and asked if they would be willing to be participants in my research study. To my surprise and delight, all four women agreed without hesitation. Because I was initially only seeking three, at most four participants for my study, agreement from all four women negated the need to pursue additional participants through the alternative routes.

Data Collection Strategies

Because my research method is life history, which pursues in-depth analysis over the span of a life, analysis of four women's lives is sufficient for this study. The number of participants included in a life history study is relatively small compared to other qualitative research studies for both logistical and ontological reasons. In life history

research, the purpose is to get as complete a biographical record as possible for a few individuals. The focus on depth of understanding requires revisiting the same research subjects over and over until a contextual life story emerges. Logistically, this requires fewer research subjects because you may interview each subject multiple times as well as spend time researching socio/cultural artifacts such as newspapers, journals, or personal correspondence. All women were informed in advance of the nature of the commitment and data collection proceeded without incident over the course of five months in the early summer to early fall of 2011.

The research project began by gathering my participants together for a few hours of collage-making. I was very anxious to choose an appropriate place for this gathering and considered several options. I had access to conference rooms at two universities, but this would require the women to travel more than thirty minutes from their homes. I could also rent a community room at one of the local libraries, but I worried about the impersonal nature of this type of gathering space. I had conducted two collage workshops previous to this one, and I believed that a more intimate setting was necessary for women to connect to each other and to relax into the process of making art. Therefore, I decided to host a brunch at my home and to combine this brunch with the collage making exercise. I hold a firm belief that there is nothing quite like food to bring people together!

Therefore, on a Saturday morning during the first week of June, the women gathered at my home to eat and to make collages. The guest list included my four research participants, but I also invited two professors from Westminster College who were interested in learning about arts-informed research and wished to participate in the

collage process. I invited the professors because I was concerned about group dynamics and originally felt that six participants were preferable to four. As mentioned above, I had conducted two previous collage workshops, one with four participants and one with ten. I felt that the workshop with more participants had a more vibrant dynamic than the one with four, so I wished to include a few more participants in the collage making process to infuse an excited energy and interaction between the women. In retrospect, I am not sure that this was necessary and it may even have detracted from a certain bond that may have been formed amongst the research participants if they had been the only ones present. Unfortunately, there are few researchers using this method and none have provided a reflective analysis of the collage making process or the mechanisms employed to create ideal circumstances in which the art can evoke meaningful life reflections and representations. In addition to me adding members to the collage making workshop, a few additional dynamics emerged in the collage making session that require explanation.

Several weeks prior to the session, I asked the women to reflect on the development of their social consciousness and key life experiences that shaped this development. I encouraged them to bring artifacts, elements or pictures to the collage workshop that would depict this development. Several women brought pictures, letters, ticket stubs, even a fishing lure, to include in their collages. I also provided them with stacks of magazines to find pictures, and colored pencils and pens to draw or add words to their collage. Other than this initial guidance and a request that the collages be made longitudinally to reflect their social consciousness over time, I gave little explanation as to how the collages should be made. I wanted the women to be free to express themselves

and explore the art form in as free a fashion as possible. However, I did give one piece of advice that proved helpful.

In a previous collage workshop, one of my participants explained that she found an image that ‘spoke to her’ but she did not know why. She ended up including it in her collage, but remained baffled as to why she felt compelled to include the image until she had completed her entire collage. In the end, she realized its importance and felt that it revealed a pattern in her life that she had not previously articulated. Therefore, I encouraged the women to include images that ‘spoke to them’ whether or not they understood the rationale behind its inclusion. This advice proved beneficial to many of the women and will be discussed more fully later in this chapter.

Another dynamic that emerged in the collage workshop was the transition into collage making. The women all arrived on time at 9:00 a.m. and as soon as introductions were made they settled into chairs and couches, began chatting, sipping cups of coffee and eating from the rather elaborate brunch I prepared. Conversation was lively for a full hour before I asked them to transition into the dining room where all the collage elements were laid out. Originally, I felt that the transition from one space to another would provide sufficient orientation to collage making. I put on classical music in the background—loud enough so that conversation would not be necessary, but soft enough so that conversation would not be inhibited. However, one of my participants, who operates a nonprofit focused on using expressive arts for at-risk youth, later expressed her disappointment that we had not done some kind of centering exercise prior to starting the collages. I confess the idea had never crossed my mind, but I could see a potential

benefit. One week after conducting the collage workshop, I was presenting a paper at a conference at the University of Toronto and had the opportunity to meet and talk with Gary Knowles, who is a pioneer in the field of arts-based research and director of the Center for Arts-Informed research at the Ontario Institute for the Studies in Education. I asked him about the benefit of doing some sort of centering exercise prior to making the collages and he responded that he did not believe a centering exercise had an inherent benefit unless *I* felt it added something to the process.

In reflection, I realized I am of two minds. I do not think some sort of centering exercise (guided meditation, a focus on quieting the mind, etc.) would have hurt the collage making process, but the collage making progressed fine without it and I am uncomfortable facilitating such exercises. Any attempt on my part to do so would have felt disingenuous and constructed. I actually have a personal loathing for guided meditation, but as one of my participants seems to have felt it would have been helpful, it is worth considering for future research endeavors. Due to my own awkwardness in such mechanisms, it would have required me to bring in a third party to facilitate a centering exercise, and then we are back to an issue raised previously regarding outside members being invited into the collage making process. Clearly, there is no one right way to facilitate these types of workshops, but I detail my own reflections here to help inform future research efforts in the nuances and challenges associated with facilitating art that acts as data in arts-informed research.

The women worked on their collages for a minimum of two hours and some stayed on for an extra hour. One participant was not able to complete her collage during

this time and asked if she could take it home to complete, which I indicated was fine. The rest of the participants left their collages with me so that I could photograph them prior to our first interview. Holding onto the collages presented an interesting dynamic. On one hand, I would have liked the women to continue referencing their collages and perhaps adding to them in the days and weeks after the workshop. However, as all the women live busy lives with multiple priorities, I doubted that they would be able to give the collage additional attention after the workshop; although I think it might be advantageous to have an opportunity for “follow-up collage”—either formally or informally. The one participant who had asked to keep her collage after our first interview made additions between our first and second interview. I did not deeply investigate her rationale for taking the time to ‘improve’ her collage, but she did indicate during our first interview that the latter half of her collage was incomplete due to her inability to find images specifically related to her mid-life career in solid waste management and that she wanted to add images from trade magazines before our next meeting.

Within two weeks of making the collages, I contacted all participants to schedule their first interview. All but one participant was available, and first round interviews were scheduled within three or four weeks of making the collages. The fourth participant was delayed due to travel and work commitments and was not interviewed for seven weeks from the time of making her collage. All interviews took place at each participant’s home and lasted from one hour to three hours depending on the women’s schedules and desire to continue the interview process. Each woman was interviewed at least three times; two women were interviewed four times. The total amount of time used to interview the

women ranged from 8 hours to 12 hours. Single spaced transcriptions of each set of interviews ranged from 26 to 37 pages and the total number of transcribed pages was 117.

Collage as a Contextualizing Factor

The presence of the collage helped contextualize and focus the interviews in two ways. First of all, I never introduced a formal interview protocol. Instead, we used the collage as a mechanism to shape and forward the conversation. Generally, the interviews would start with me asking the participant to describe a picture that had been included in the collage and its significance to her social consciousness. This simple direction would open the conversation for the women to tell her story in whatever way she felt appropriate. Often she would refer back to the collage and continue to reference additional images as her narrative unfolded. Eventually, all the images on the collage were explained and if some were missed, I would return focus to the collage, ask about an image and gain clarity. The images acted as a natural mechanism to enter into the women's stories and I would ask clarifying questions only as necessary as the stories emerged. The collage elements also seemed to act as reminders to the women about important aspects of their history. It is impossible to know if these aspects would have emerged as effortlessly with an interview protocol as they did with the collage. However, because the women did put some reflection into preparations for the collage workshop and into making the collage, it could be argued that more thoughtful elements were referenced in the collage making than would have occurred in answering questions in the moment.

During the initial interviews, the women were asked about their experiences

making the collages, including their thoughts and preparations leading up to the collage workshop, their experience making the collages and any feelings or thoughts they had after completing the collage. During the interview process, I asked the women to describe their collage elements as they related to the development of social consciousness. In several instances, the descriptions of the elements in the collage pointed to deeply personal and complicated relationships or understandings that I do not believe I would have been exposed to with a more direct question and answer technique. Participant reflections on preparation for the collage making, their experience making the collage and examples of the way collage elements revealed relationships and understandings are presented below.

Preparation for Making the Collage

Prior to the collage workshop, I emailed copies of IRB documents to each woman and explained the intent of the study and the process of making the collage. The women knew that their identities would be protected with pseudonyms, but they were encouraged to bring personal items to include in their collage if they wished. The collages are shown in Figures 1-4.

In setting up for the collage workshop, I explained that in addition to brunch, I would provide a variety of magazines and all the material necessary to make the collages. I encouraged the women to bring personal items if they wished. Responses to the level of preparation for making the collages varied.

Freya had a very casual attitude regarding preparation for making the collage as indicated when she said, “Since you said you would have stuff there, I didn’t bother

A long, horizontal collage of various images including people, landscapes, and text, with the 'VCU' logo at the bottom right.

[illegible]

Figure 4. Joy's collage.

hunting for too many things but some of these things that are here are mine and they are things that I've saved because they meant something to me." Julia took preparation for the collage workshop much more seriously and spent the better part of a weekend in contemplation. She reflected on her preparation in the following statement.

I actually really enjoyed going through and reading with the question in my mind and paying attention to my intuitive sense of connections to different pictures...to whether this had an influence on why I am like I am today. So I spent a lot of introspective time. That was a nice life review. I'm almost 70, so it was good for me to do that. It was Memorial Day, so that was very symbolic.... I really enjoyed that part.

Julia did not complete her collage during the workshop and took it home with her to continue working on. For Julia, the experience of preparing for the collage was very meaningful and she continued to add to the collage for a small amount of time after the collage workshop was completed.

After seeing Julia's level of preparation, Grace felt underprepared. She expressed these feeling when she said:

I don't think I prepared sufficiently. Especially when I met with Julia and she had gone through and brought her own resources to make the collage...family photos. I probably would have brought another stack or two of magazines that maybe had things that had more images, such as my garbage magazines. There were some images that I didn't find readily. One of the comments that was really helpful to me, that made me realize I would have done a more effective job was the idea of the timeline. That is something I've never thought about...putting my whole life in a context. That helped me in preparing the collage—thinking of it in more of a timeline.

Grace took her collage home with her and continued to work on it for several weeks, drawing from trade magazines to fill in career elements that she could not represent during the collage workshop. She also felt the process of considering her life along a timeline was personally and emotionally rewarding.

Joy realized that her preparation made little difference in the end, as represented when she said:

Well for several days, about a week before, I was spending some time thinking about it. Have I ever done a collage? I couldn't remember ever having done a collage so the night before...since it was life history...I went to old photo albums from my childhood and from early in my marriage, which is now 26 years, and started taking pictures out. Then I realized that that was just significant life events, not necessarily sea-change kinds of moments. But, when I was together with all of the women during the morning of the collage, I was able to get a lot of energy from them and figure out what imagery really represented a sea-change and I found I only used two of the photographs that I had selected out of maybe more than two dozen and one icon, which was this fly fishing fly (see Figure 5). I thought that was interesting in the moment.

Joy was not the only participant to use an artifact in her collage. Freya used ticket stubs from travel and thank you notes from donors; however, most of the collages were comprised of visual elements such as personal photographs and images cut from magazines. Additionally, some of the women drew words, cut out words and drew visual element such as lines, scribbles and shapes.



Figure 5. Fishing fly.

Experience Making the Collage

Julia, who indicated really enjoying preparing for the collage workshop by going through her items on Memorial Weekend stated:

When we were at your house, I found it really difficult, as I mentioned, because I was also very interested in the conversation. I like intellectual conversations, and I thought it was very stimulating what everyone was talking about and I wanted to be a part of that so I could lose myself into this.

Julia was also the participant who had indicated a desire for a centering exercise at the

beginning of making the collage. Given Julia's background in using expressive arts as a therapeutic tool for at-risk children to connect and express themselves, it is no wonder she felt my own processes were clumsy and disjointed. It is also notable that she felt divided in her enjoyment of the intellectual conversation and her wish to internalize the artistic process of making the collage. This is an important consideration for future researchers: Do you wish your participants to bond with each other or to bond with their art? While these outcomes need not be mutually exclusive, they might be fostered through different processes of conversation, silence, guided meditation, facilitated questions, or other mechanisms.

Freya picked up on Julia's struggles but approached making the collage from a very different perspective as shown when she said:

I found the process easy. I felt some people struggled with that at the table and maybe I was sensing it totally wrong to me, "what's the big deal? Just put something together." I think this has to do with our culture and probably the people that were gathered are people who care about what they do and what they produce. I think in our culture especially in art, people always say 'Oh I can't draw' and I think we are more creative than we give ourselves credit for. It's because of our culture—we don't allow people to be creative because someone might look at it and say "why did you do that? That's stupid." See I don't care if someone says "why did you put that there? That's stupid." I don't care—for me doing it was easy...it flowed and again I don't know why—I just got a sense that some people were having a difficult time, but for me my process was easy and I wasn't having a difficult time.

Freya finished her collage first and her ease with the process was somewhat unusual.

When I asked her if the images represented things differently than if we had just been having a conversation, Freya replied, "No because this is the kind of story that I've learned to tell." In this respect, Freya's collage is different from her fellow participants in that it is representational rather than exploratory. Because Freya is the founder and

president of an international nonprofit, she has become accustomed to telling the story of her nonprofit to many audiences. In this respect, her collage was representative of her nonprofit, more than it was representative of her, although the growth of both are undoubtedly intertwined. That said, the latter images in Freya's collage represent greater personal relaxation, something she indicated she had come to realize was necessary in the past year and she had been striving to manage and/or minimize organizational growth in order to foster work/life balance.

Freya completed her collage in about an hour, but the other women spent an additional hour on their collages and two of the women continued working on their collages at home. I believe the ease of interaction with making the collage has much to do with the level of symbolic interaction with the images one chooses to use to represent one's life. I asked Joy, "Did you struggle as you were making the collage—pulling the images together?" She replied, "No, but I got a real sense that I needed this image or I needed that image." She indicated that because she was in conversation around the table, she asked "Hey has anybody seen a beer?" and someone finally found her a beer (see Figure 6). She also indicated the need to find an image that she could not find, but that she found another one that would work. The image she was searching for was an image for lettuce pickers (see Figure 7). Joy's attachment to finding both a beer and an image of a lettuce picker



Figure 6. Beer photo.

represented a dynamic that emerged in the collages in which the images revealed stories and deeply personal understandings of my participants that I came to believe would not have otherwise been revealed with a traditional interview protocol.

Collage as an Entry Point to Deeper Representations

In describing her need to find both a beer and a picture of a lettuce picker (see Figure 7), Joy remembers an aunt who took her three times to Europe to look at the great art of the world. This was a “remarkable, out-of-context experience for a girl from a lily white suburban, lower middle-class family.” She references the beer and the cigarettes as what she remembers “going on inside of our house—it was always smoky. My dad always had a beer and a boilermaker.” Joy’s father was Irish Catholic and died of complications from alcoholism and her family had a very strong social democratic liberal point of view. They “didn’t eat lettuce because of Caesar Chavez and the farm workers movement” and they “only wore American-made clothes.” As Joy recalls “we were all about any kind of power struggle, particularly as it related to civil rights.” Joy included a picture of John F. Kennedy in her collage (see Figure 8), in reflection states, “all the Kennedys were God in our house. I suppose the fact that he is standing on a chair and elevated is more than appropriate.”



Figure 7. Image for lettuce pickers.



Figure 8. John F. Kennedy.

Joy went on to reference a picture of a place setting (see Figure 9), “this



Figure 9. Image represents Aunt Dolly.

represents my Aunt Dolly, who came to live with us.”

Joy’s mother was orphaned and raised by her aunt, but as

Joy stated, “If you asked my mom, she would say she

actually enslaved my mom.” Joy’s job every night was to

set the table and she recalls, “I knew which steak knife

Aunt Dolly wanted, but I always put it at my place. She

would go and switch it to her place—we would do this two

or three times [before] we sat down to dinner.” Forks and knives were Joy’s image of her

Aunt Dolly. I asked Joy, “Why did you do that?” and she responded:

Because, I felt that my mom loved her more than she loved me. That message comes back in my nonprofit work in spades. Yes, I was an only child...which is kind of remarkable, particularly from Roman Catholic parents who in their era it was their job to be baby machines. Hard to believe that I couldn’t get attention, but that speaks more to my mom’s brokenness than anything about me.... I know that now at 50.

Joy’s pictures/stories reveal a richly contextual home life

influenced by alcohol, Catholicism, and social democracy, as

well as an emotional struggle for attention and love—all of

which later influenced her commitments to work with

nonprofits with a social justice focus.

Julia also referenced two images from her childhood that held particularly impactful meanings. One image was of her childhood birthday costume that was custom made by her grandmother (see Figure 10), whom she had to live with once



Figure 10. Party dress.

her mother entered a mental hospital for five years. Julia was the only granddaughter of a

wealthy, first Virginia family and recalls;

I was pretty spoiled really. I was grateful that I didn't end up like that. I'm sure I would have been a terror if I had to stay there any longer than I did. For example, at my ninth birthday party, all the little girls wore ballet costumes [this is my birthday party outfit my grandmother had done by a seamstress] and we played canasta, and had lovely little tea sandwiches. When I lived with my mother and father, I remember playing in the street with the boys and the kids in the neighborhood. One time we were playing hide and seek and I was in the trashcan and my grandmother and grandfather drove up in his car to the front of the house. I popped out of the garbage can and my mother was so embarrassed and horrified—it was this clash of culture because things were changing with the younger generation but formality [continued], especially with Virginia up through the New England area.

Julia discusses another image included in her collage for this period of her life, a drawing

of a bird (see Figure 11). In reflection she states, “A lot of

this is representative of the loneliness as a child. I used to

spend a lot of time in the yard of my grandmothers alone.”

She indicated that in childhood “for some reason” she

“would find dead birds and would bury them.” Julia shows

reflectivity of her childhood loneliness when she states “I

don't know what that's about but I also felt like I kind of communicated with the birds—

since I had no one to play with.”



Figure 11. Bird drawing.

As mentioned previously, Julia had to live with her grandmother at the age of 5 when her mother entered a mental hospital. In her collage, she drew a line with red, brown and black scribbling at approximately this time in her life (see Figure 12). I asked her if this line was symbolic and she stated that “it was the sudden breakdown of the whole life and everything changed.” This distinct linear bifurcation was also seen in Grace's collage. For Grace, this line represented “a very dramatic split from when my

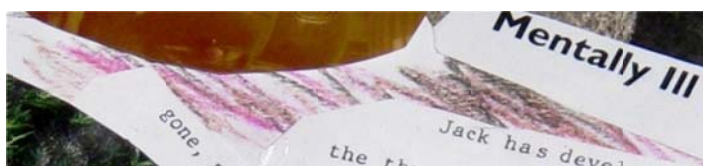


Figure 12. Scribbled line.

mother had cancer, which was when I was 15. At that time I really felt I became an adult and a responsible person.”

In questioning Grace about the line in her collage, she stated, “I had a real need to draw a line...this ended and this began.” I asked her if she had a sense of that need and she replied, “It was intuitive. I said these don’t go together. And so you had some ribbon so I stuck it in...and about that time I found the word cancer. I thought this [part of my life] was life changing.”

While interviewing Grace about this period in her life, she continuously used a hand slicing motion over the line in her collage. It was so noticeable, I later drew her attention to it when I said, “When you were describing this time in your life—you used this hand slicing motion consistently as if you were saying ‘No I’ve got to cut this apart, I’ve got to separate it.’” She replied, “Yes, that’s right.” Grace later revealed that one night when she was 15, in a drunken rage, her father had tried to kick her to death and her mother had urged him on. Her mother was riddled with cancer and dying—both parents had become so unstable that Grace realized in one night that her childhood was over. She represented this dramatic split with a red ribbon running at a diagonal across her collage (see Figure 13) and reinforced this split during the narration of her childhood stories with a consistent sawing motion.

The representation of line as symbolic of before-and-after trauma is an interesting expression of meaning for both Grace and Julia that I believe merits further inquiry for

Louvre, which became tied to another story of a wealthy aunt who took her to Europe and exposed her to art. The utter juxtaposition of the cigarette next to paintings of Van Gough and Monet further represent the juxtaposition of realities as she ventured from an emotionally stifling, working class home to the elegant and pristine halls of the world's finest galleries. As the stories unfolded, they too became a collage—story snippet, next to story snippet. As each snippet was told, pattern and meaning became apparent within the larger “narrative collage.” There was little excess, little that was not intentional.

Participant Narratives

In considering and constructing each participant's life narrative, I was also keeping an eye on my research questions. After gaining an understanding of the meanings ascribed to each collage element in the initial interview, I explored learning related to key events and life circumstances in subsequent interviews. I focused these interviews around the questions of: “What was learned during these pivotal moments?” and “How did this learning affect changes in social consciousness?” After each interview, I transcribed the digital recordings and sent a copy to the participant interviewed for member checking. Follow-up questions or points of clarification were handled by email or phone. Data was stored in a password protected computer and every attempt was made create a safe and respectful research environment.

During the interviews, each woman was extremely open and forthcoming, and at times the interviews took on a therapeutic quality. As women recounted past experiences from childhood, difficult adult relationships, or perceptions of injustice, throats caught, eyes filled with tears and the interview paused while they regained their composure. I

always asked if they wanted to continue and if they would like to talk more about the subject that was painful for them. These moments of vulnerability never ended our scheduled interviews, but sometimes the subject was changed and the conversation redirected. Because the telling of a life is often the reliving of painful life experiences, I wanted each woman to feel safe about the stories she told. I also wanted the stories to retain the character, cadence, and power of each woman's voice in addition to the narrative quality of each woman's lived experience.

In considering how to represent the life history data, I drew from the work of Cole and Knowles (2001) who believed that "to craft a life is to engage in making art" and "to conceptualize representational possibilities is to be thoroughly alert to the various alternatives that resonate deep within our creative and epistemological frameworks" (p. 103). For me this representation needed to match the flavor of the entire dissertation. In other words, the data representation needed to coemerge from the mutually specifying interactions of arts-based research; textual transcriptions, my interpretations; participant corrections and a life represented as lived experience, rather than dissected snippets of interest. The women had honored me with their stories and I believed the experience of hearing their stories influenced my ability to understand their learning related to social consciousness more deeply, just as I felt seeing their collage pictures helped me understand deeper levels of meaning related to their stories. Therefore, I felt a condensed version of the participant's life histories needed to be told in their entirety for readers to *experience* the stories about learning related to social consciousness. For this reason, I consulted each participant and asked permission to represent their data in a textual

collage, which pieces together the woman's own words in a first person narrative account of her own life. My words are used as "glue" to hold the story together and are used minimally. The women's words are represented in normal text and *my words are in italics* and used to 'glue' text fragments together into a readable narrative. All normal text is direct transcription text or participant text edits. Text in [brackets] was added after the interviews for clarity, ellipses (...) were maintained to preserve voice unless participants removed them during the final editing process. Sentences, fragments and paragraphs from the initial interview transcriptions were moved to created impact and flow in the narrative, but every attempt was made to maintain the original intent of the text. These life history narratives are presented in their entirety in the appendix.

As a form of member checking, participants reviewed both their transcribed interviews and their life history narratives. When they checked their transcribed interviews, I asked them to simply check for accuracy of dates, names and inherent meaning of statements. The second, and more important time, was in the negotiation of this narrative. Participants had final editorial control and participants were given the final editing privileges for their narratives. My own analysis, using enactivism, was drawn from the original transcribed data as well as the life history narratives and represents each woman's evolution of social consciousness as a product of learning enacted through her lived experienced.

CHAPTER IV

DATA AND ANALYSIS

Analysis Strategy

Life histories are typically analyzed within a socio/cultural context (Cole & Knowles, 2001; Dhunpath, 2000; Goodley, 1996; Henning, 2000; Janesick, 2010), to give personal meaning and lived experience to that context. However, this study looks at personal meaning and lived experience related to learning. Therefore, each life history will be analyzed around three constructs central to an enactivist learning framework: structural organization, structural coupling and coemergence. Because all three constructs evolve over a historical period of time (Maturana & Varela, 1987; Varela et al., 1991), each participant's life history is represented in an abbreviated narrative *to give evidence of these constructs emerging within the lived history of the participant*. I analyzed each life history narrative using the enactivist constructs of structural organization, structural coupling, and coemergence. Although these concepts were presented in the literature review of this dissertation, the next section presents a more in-depth articulation of these concepts coupled with an explanation of how they are perceived in social/cultural systems and interpreted through interpersonal dynamics. The intention of placing this explanation in this location was to prepare the reader to engage with the participants' life history narratives with a ready understanding of structural organization, structural coupling and coemergence.

From Biology to Human Interaction

Most autopoietic theorizing has been largely focused on biological systems and computer simulations in mathematical spaces but theorizing in the human domain has also ensued (Baerveldt & Verheggen, 1999; Capra, 1996; Maturana & Varela, 1987). Maturana sees human social systems as the “medium in which human beings realize their biological autopoiesis through ‘language’...which results in a shared system of belief, explanations and values—a content of meaning—that is continually sustained by further conversations” (Capra, 1996, pp. 212-213). Various family members are defined and ‘self-produced’ based on their roles, which in turn create a familial system boundary of expectations, confidentialities, loyalties and behaviors. Autopoietic or self-producing family members continually maintain and/or renegotiate family roles and boundaries through their network of conversations (Capra, 1996).

Organizational Structure as Identity

Maturana and Varela (1987) defined two criteria of living systems as the structure and the pattern of organization.³ The structure was “the physical embodiment of its pattern of organization” whereas the pattern of organization is the “configuration of relationships among the system’s components that determines the system’s essential characteristics” (Capra, 1996, p. 158). In the enactive paradigm, it is also helpful to understand that it is “the organization of a system that for an observer constitutes its

³ Because this study operates at the social level, not at the biological level in which the terms “structure” and “structural organization” were developed, I will use both to reference personal identity in the analysis section of this dissertation. I adopt this practice in order to avoid confusing my reader, base my thinking on Merleau-Ponty’s (1962) philosophy of double embodiment that states the body is both the biologic and the identity, and hope no biologists are offended in the reading.

identity and that determines the interactions and transformations it may undergo as such a unity” (Maturana & Varela, 1980, p. 77). In other words, the structure represents the body and contains the structural organization; the structural organization(s)⁴ of an individual represents an aspect of their identity based on a worldview. Worldviews are each individual’s understanding of the nature of reality through their genetic tendencies, culture, geography, experiences, attitudes, values and relationship to their environment (Schlitz et al., 2010).

How Structure Shapes Interactions

Ontogeny is the history of structural changes in a particular living being and each being begins with an initial structure. This “structure conditions the course of its interactions and restricts the structural changes that the interactions may trigger in it” (Maturana & Varela, 1987, p. 95). To be clear, Maturana and Varela claim that the behavior of a living organism is determined, but not entirely by outside forces or in the same way that behaviorist would conceive of this influence. Rather, an organisms own structure, render it “both determined and free” (Capra, 1996, p. 220).

If considered from a social perspective, enactivism acts as a theory of meaning based on what “could be called the ‘law of conservation of identity’” (Baerveldt & Verheggen, 1999, p. 195). Thus, individuals will enable structural changes (learning) only to the degree that these operations maintain their identity. These identities are both maintained and changed through patterns of social relationships, where speaking and

⁴ In biological terms structural organization is referred to in the singular, but as enactivism is a learning theory that considers the social realm, and as individuals are considered to have multiple identities (Norquay, 1990), I reference structural organization in the plural where appropriate.

interacting create both worldviews and identities (Baerveldt & Verheggen, 1999; Schlitz et al., 2010). Thus each individual creates their experience from meaning rather than information, but that experience is not an independent construction, nor a socially shared representation. Rather, it is a coemergent experience brought forth through forms of communication and joint action.

Structural Coupling

As discussed in the previous section, one's structure is an aspect of identity based on worldviews. These worldviews enable or disable an individual to make connections to others, opportunities, or environments. As Varela and his colleagues (1991) put it, "it is actually the system itself that on the basis of its own autonomy 'enacts' a domain of significance with respect to which it can act (p. 149). In other words, it is the structural organization of an individual that determines its cognitive domain, or the domain of possible interactions (learning) into which it can enter without losing its identity.

The environment can trigger or align certain patterns of structural change, but cannot enact the full range of potential changes possible because the individual 'controls' the coupling. As Proulx (2008) stated, "I bring forth a world of significance, if I do not bring them forth, the physical world's attributes will still be 'there,' but they will remain unnoticed, not made sense of and kept 'in the dark'" (p. 22). Therefore, individuals bring forth meaning from a background of understandings, and this background of understandings creates the cognizing capacity to specify which perturbations from the environment will trigger structural changes. These structural changes constitute acts of cognition, which are "not a representation[s] of an independently existing world, but

rather a continual *bringing forth of a world* through the process of living” (Capra, 1996, p. 267).

Coemergence

Coemergence can best be understood as the result of successful structural coupling, a coupling where learning or change takes place in the individual and as a result, the environment with which the individual is coupled is affected by this learning.

As Fenwick (2001) stated:

Change or “knowing” occurs from emerging systems affected by the intentional tinkering of one with the other. When two systems coincide, the “perturbations” of one system excite responses in the structural dynamics of the other. The resultant disequilibrium and “coupling” creates a new transcendent unity of action and identities that could not have been achieved independently by either participant. (p. 247)

Thus, coupled systems undergo continual structural changes and mutual coadaptations while preserving their own patterns of organization (Capra, 1996). This coupling and the resulting coemergence “can therefore be defined as a history of interlocked conduct” (Baerveldt & Verheggen, 1999, p. 197).

Despite a history of interlocked conduct, it is important to realize that all histories of coupling need not be optimal; they need simply be viable (Varela et al., 1991). “As long as the interactions lasts, the interacting systems trigger structural changes in each other but cannot coerce each other into a certain course of action” (Baerveldt & Verheggen, 1999, p. 196). From a social perspective, this means that individuals must continually navigate the roles they play and the way their roles play them. If an individual is coupled in an environment that threatens their identity or forces them into coercive

action, then the viability of the coupling will be threatened. Even in less than optimal circumstance they may remain coupled, but as Fenwick (2001) so adroitly states, the structures will “coevolve in a complex relation of identity and daily choice” (p. 255).

This section presented enactivist concepts helpful in analyzing learning related to social consciousness in the four life history narratives of my participants. A conceptual bridge between enactivist biological constructs and human interactions was presented to help shape the analysis and then the specific concepts structural organization, structural coupling and coemergence as they apply to human interactions were considered. In the next sections, these concepts are used to analyze each woman’s life history narrative to gain an understanding of how learning related to social consciousness was enacted.

Freya’s Enacted Social Consciousness

A little over 12 years ago, Freya formed a nonprofit organization that funds grassroots initiatives in Kenya, Africa. A primary focus of her organization is to empower women through microcredit, training in basic health, and women’s rights. Her organization also educates children through sponsorships, and enhances health with mosquito net distribution and funding for water wells and latrines.

Freya was born the second child and the only girl in a family of three children. Her father was an engineer who worked as the director of test and quality control at a missile and jet engine manufacturing plant and her mother was “your typical woman of that era and weak” who “never talked back to [her] father” even though she had a Master’s degree in Library Sciences. During Freya’s childhood, three distinct structural

organizations related to her social justice identity emerged which later became enacted through her social consciousness. These structures were hard work, frugality and altruistic suffering.

Hard Work

Freya contended, “The only thing I really got from my childhood was hard work.” In fact, Freya paints a rather bleak picture of her childhood in which her father is more task master than father figure. She tells a story about when she was 5:

I had to pick the rocks out of the dirt where we were going to plant grass. I hated that none of my other friends had to pick rocks but I did. I had to pick a bucket of rocks before I could play. I worked all summer and my friends played.

She remembered that she and her brothers were all held to these standards and “we all had to work hard. If we were sitting around doing nothing, my father would find us something to do.”

When Freya was 7, her father bought a ranch in upper northern British Columbia and every summer her mother, her brothers and she would drive up there to work the ranch. Her father would stay behind because of his job at the manufacturing plant, but he bought a small plane so that he could fly up for holiday weekends. In remembering this experience, Freya stated:

So in the fall when [we] had to come back to school [mimicking father] “Damn I wish they could stay up there forever and work on the ranch and be my slaves”—that’s what we often thought. We bought this plane and planes have paint on them. If you think about what a gallon of paint weighs, it slows the plane down. So we had to go out on Saturdays and Sundays to Central City airport and strip the paint off the plane. I’m driving out to the Central City airport and I’m about nine years old, in this ‘57 Chevy, but I hate it. We’re out for another day to strip paint off of the airplane because it takes a lot to strip paint off an airplane, and so I’m sitting there slumped over and my dad says, “What are you sulking about?”

and I say “I don’t want to go out there.” My dad says “That’s too bad!” and I said, “I wish I was dead.” and he said “So do I and you’re not so...” and so that’s kind of my attitude on life. I look at life...I mean I have a friend and she loves life and she’ll tell me how she loves life and I think, “I wish it was over with. Get me out of here.” I believe that life is horrible and I want to be dead as soon as I can be. I’m tired of living and I say that honestly. I’ve been tired of living since I was a little girl.

Freya’s comments reference a structural identity of extreme hard work that developed in early childhood that has forced Freya to push herself. She clearly indicated during our interviews that she is “not suicidal, but it’s just that I’m so tired of this—see I think it’s because I’m a fighter, because I always have to be working.”

In adulthood, Freya’s childhood structure of hard work gets enacted by structurally coupling with social justice environments (Varela et al., 1991). Her orientation towards social justice struggles, as well as how she draws from her past experiences can be seen when she says, “That’s how come I’m always putting my shoulder to the wheel to press along because life isn’t easy. It wasn’t meant to be fun. It’s just work and then you die.”

Although the structures related to hard work were formed in Freya’s childhood, they did not actually structurally couple to her social consciousness until her mid-thirties. She had dreams of participating in the Peace Corps in her early twenties, but these dreams did not become a reality because she married right out of high school and entered college. In recalling this time she stated:

I protested the Vietnam War. I remember telling [my husband] when we got married that after we had kids and they were grown, that we would go into the Peace Corps. The Peace Corps was always there in my mind, it was in my mind, but [at] that [time] I was more egotistical. We bought a piece of property. We built a home.

Therefore, Freya spent her twenties completing her education and raising her child. During our interview sessions, she did not reference any volunteer experiences during this time, simply explaining that this period of her life was devoted to the pursuits of building a home and life with her family.

After a very painful divorce, Freya talked about getting the “chair kicked out from under her” and the fear she confronted in beginning an independent life. She “didn’t have time [to volunteer] and [her son] was still in third grade,” but she spent several years building up her ego after the divorce by racing her bike. In reflecting on this time she stated:

I always tell people, that when you’re on an airplane and when they tell you on the plane, ‘if the oxygen mask falls down, you put yours on first and then you put on your child’s’ because you have to take care of yourself first. So I think that’s true. One should feel that you’ve taken care of yourself then you can take care of others.

Once Freya had taken care of herself, she launched into an amazing plethora of volunteering efforts that spanned over a decade. Drawing on her identity structure of hard work she remembers, “I did a lot of volunteering in my community during those corporate years” but her initial attempts to structurally couple with volunteerism were through opportunities available in her corporate environment with the United Way. Given that Freya was a busy single mother, this is an interesting example of how her environment ‘triggered’ her into action (Proux, 2008) and enabled her to structurally couple her identity as a hard worker with her developing social consciousness in a viable manner (Varela et al., 1991).

For over a decade, Freya volunteered in her community. Her volunteerism ranged

from literacy behind bars at the jail, to volunteering on United Way's day of caring. She tutored at her local junior high and planted trees all over the valley. While all of these experiences show structural coupling between Freya's social consciousness identity structures and opportunities in the community, two volunteer opportunities stood out in their ability to help Freya structurally couple her work ethic to environments that enabled her to coemerge her social consciousness, effect change within environments and be changed by the environment (Davis & Sumara, 1997; Sumara & Davis, 1997). The first opportunity was as a mentor for People helping People for women on welfare as they bridge the gap. As she stated, "I felt like I had something I could offer these women who are on welfare to help them bridge." The other opportunity was when she was a CASA (a court appointed state advocate for children who are in state custody) and she reflected, "When I was a CASA, I felt like I was doing something."

Although we cannot understand the degree to which Freya affected her environment, clearly she was affected by her environment. From an enactivist perspective, both coemerged in a mutually specifying relationship based on the specifying structures of those needing help and desiring connection, and Freya's structural organization which enabled her to couple with the environment, maintain a relationship with the environment and coemerge her social consciousness within the environment (Varela et al., 1991). If the relationship had become nonviable (Maturana & Varela, 1987), meaning Freya felt she was gaining nothing from her interactions or her social conscious identity was threatened, the coupling with the environment would not have been maintained and coemergence would have ceased or never existed (Varela et

al., 1991).

Freya's social consciousness was structurally coupled to her experiences in volunteering, but was also tied to the environment of her home life. As she noted:

[My son] was 17 or 18 and he was finishing up high school and it wasn't something I thought to myself: [he] finishes high school.... I can do this. It's kind of interesting, you know, it's just there. It's not a consciousness but I must've been somewhere and talked to someone about 'Oh I want to go to an African country and to do something.'

Actually, this desire to go to Africa to "do something" stems from an early childhood memory that apparently lay dormant throughout her early adulthood and early volunteer efforts. However, this was a powerful childhood memory that shaped Freya's social consciousness and the formation of her nonprofit. As Freya recalled:

From my earliest memory as a child, I wanted to go to Africa and plant corn. I think maybe I saw Save the Children or something on TV—kids starving, Ethiopia...drought, whatever. I don't know and that's just always stayed with me.

As noted, Freya's early volunteer efforts did not involve Africa and were mostly focused on community based projects. However, in 1992, she traveled to Kenya as a tourist, which enacted an entirely different aspect of her social consciousness.

Freya's trip to Kenya was for travel and tourism; however, the environment triggered Freya's structural organization around hard work (Proux, 2008) and she structurally coupled with opportunities that emerged from the trip. While in Kenya, she befriended two Kenyans and became their pen pals. Later when she got home, she studied the work of Nobel Peace Prize winner Mohammed Yunus on microcredit and decided she wanted to start a microcredit program in Kenya. As she recalled:

As a young girl I always wanted to go to Africa and plant corn. As I grew older I learned that people in African know how to plant corn they just don't have the

resources—floods, droughts, whatever...too many people. I learned about Mohammed Yunus and microcredit and I realize that's what I wanted to do because I wanted to do something that wasn't a hand out, it was a hand up. I didn't even read his book until later, but hearing about him...just reading articles.

This passage is important because it indicates a perturbation in the structural coupling between Freya's desire to enact her social consciousness, her inclination towards hard work, and the effectiveness of her actions. In other words, the environment she is coupled to is triggering a change within her (learning), and in turn, she will affect the environment differently (Proulx, 2008). Put another way, she is coemerging with the environment, just as the environment is coemerging from her interactions with it.

Based on her understanding of microcredit, Freya took \$2000 of her own money and traveled back to Kenya to start a small microcredit venture. As she recollected:

I told Simon (my pen pal) in the letter 'you get some women together and I want to do this microcredit' it was all in the letter. I told him about Mohammed Yunus and all about microcredit and told him to get five women together and have them come up with a plan. I told Simon, I'm coming, I'm not coming as a tourist.

This second trip to Kenya laid the foundations for Freya's nonprofit. When she returned, her boyfriend said "If you want to start a nonprofit I'll make a donation of \$500 but I want to get a tax donation."

The challenge to start a nonprofit coupled with Freya's structure of hard work and enabled her to enact her social consciousness through the founding of a nonprofit. During this time, Freya remembers sitting in the library "on Saturdays and Sundays when my friends [were] skiing" studying how to properly form a nonprofit because she was "very frightened of the IRS." At one point she thought "I'm not going to do this" and called a friend for advice, who said, "Freya, that's what they want you to do—they want you to

give up.” Therefore, it became a challenge and “Freya never steps down from a challenge.”

In this way, Freya was able to structurally couple her astonishing work ethic with an environment that would enable the enactment of her social consciousness. The only thing she did not plan for was the degree to which the demands of running a nonprofit would force her to spend time in administrative duties, and the struggles she would have getting her board and volunteers to work as hard as she does. She has been putting 1500 hours per year into her nonprofit while working a regular job and is struggling with burnout. Although she is currently seeking greater balance with this workload, the identity structures related to hard work make this difficult as evidenced by the statement, “I probably make things like a chore, a project, a task”

Freya has run her nonprofit for twelve years, but has reached a point in her life where balance is a priority and she is reevaluating the focus of her nonprofits efforts. In this vein, she laments the degree to which the nonprofit has taken her away from connecting to others. As she stated:

I didn't know. I just was doing it so I could get some money because I know you have to be legitimate if people are going to give you money—you have to incorporate in the State and you have to file with the IRS and you have to do all that stuff. So I did all that stuff but I didn't know I was going to have to do all this other shit. There was never a want or need to run a business, to be a boss, to be a leader. I really just want to help people.

Over the past several years the structural coupling between Freya's identity of hard work and her social consciousness is becoming structurally non-viable because it is not enabling her to connect with others and is creating too much of a work/life imbalance. As Fenwick (2001) noted, this is a case of “old choices gradually become unviable in the

unfolding system dynamics” (p. 255). In order for the nonprofit to remain a viable environment through which Freya can enact her social consciousness, it must provide an avenue through which she can continue to grow and evolve rather than coercing her into actions misaligned with the evolving expression of her social consciousness identity (Baerveldt & Verheggen, 1999).

Frugality

A second structural organization that emerged in Freya’s childhood was an orientation towards frugality. Even though her father was a director at a manufacturing plant, Freya remembers her family as “dirt poor” when she was growing up. This created a schism in Freya’s class structure because Freya remembers the other director’s children living in nice homes and driving in Cadillacs. As Freya recalled, “We didn’t live like a director because all of the money went to the ranch. We had cows dying. I mean you don’t make money ranching.”

Not only was prudence demonstrated in her home, but it was taught to her by her father. Freya remembered:

My father always had me write a contract every year I went to the ranch—that he would pay me so much for doing what I would do and I would sign it and he would sign it. I would make a dollar a day taking care of [my little brother]—fixing breakfast, lunch and dinner. I got a penny for every pole I would strip with a machete. My father always taught me to get it in writing. I think if I hadn’t have got it in writing, my father wouldn’t have paid me. I picked out a sheep, we didn’t take cows because cows were worth too much, but I had a sheep and she would have lambs and her wool would pay for her food. I don’t know...I would get a little money every year from the lamb she would have. I had to make that money last for the year. I didn’t have to buy my own food but I did have to buy my own clothes. And so when I would run out of money then I would vacuum and sweep in Central City. I started working at a ranch house when I was 15.

The structures defined in childhood around frugality contributed to Freya's feelings about spending. In her words, she is "not a consumer." Furthermore, she states she is "pretty tight with money and giving money—but [she'll] give time."

Freya's structure of frugality coupled with myriad volunteer opportunities because she is more willing to give her time than her money. As she stated:

I feel if I have something to give then I should give it. Some people don't want to give their time, they'll just write a check for a hundred dollars. I'd rather give my time than write a check for a hundred dollars just because I'm so frugal.

Freya's frugality has created an interesting dynamic through which her social consciousness is enacted. Although Freya chooses social justice causes through which to structurally couple, it is the fact that she gives her time, not money, which enabled her social consciousness to coemerge and evolve within the environments she chooses.

Another interesting aspect of Freya's frugality structure is her bent towards anti-consumerism tied to her social consciousness. Not only is Freya generous with her time, she feels a moral obligation to "make a difference." She bases this obligation on a sense of being lucky to have been born in America and interestingly, extends this sense of obligation to others, stating, "I think anybody born in this country or in Europe or any free country.... I think it's their obligation to do something and not go shopping!" Freya focused this desire to make a difference by starting a micro-credit enterprise which is a viable structural coupling of her frugality with her social consciousness. Because early efforts indicated repayment rates in the high ninety percent for microcredit loans (Yunus, 1999), Freya was at little risk for losing money. She needed to work hard to ensure the success of her venture, but this dynamic enabled an existing structural organization of

hard work to couple with circumstances within the environment (the need to accomplish her goal of a successful venture) in a way that strengthened her structural organizations of frugality and hard work and enabled them to coemerge with the environment in order to enact her social consciousness.

Since Freya had been previously coupling her structural organization of hard work to volunteer opportunities, it is interesting to note why she ceased volunteering and started her own non-profit. After all, she could have volunteered with microcredit organizations rather than starting her own nonprofit. The reason appears to be that her structure of frugality was not structurally coupling in a viable manner to the volunteer opportunities that interested her. As she states, “Those are expensive trips. When you go with Choice Humanitarian for 2 weeks, it normally costs a minimum of \$3,000 plus airfare. They do some good things, but I didn’t get a sense of satisfaction.”

Her lack of satisfaction in taking trips through a large humanitarian organization also seems to indicate that previously satisfactory structural couplings were no longer viable, that she had outgrown what they had to offer and was looking for greater opportunities to express her need to connect to others as indicated in this statement.

There’s more and I guess for me is that, you know, I have to touch—that’s being Freya. I need to touch the people and needing to do that and not being satisfied with going over with Choice because that’s a lot of money to go over with Choice. I don’t think I would feel if I went on one of their trips...I think I would come home and still be hungry.

The hunger Freya referenced pointed to a desire to make a difference on a more personal level, which led Freya to start her own nonprofit. Learning related to this decision coemerged within the structural couplings of hard work and frugality and the

environments of travel, volunteerism and Kenya. Without the structures of frugality and hard work, Freya may have remained satisfied enacting her social consciousness through a wide variety of volunteer activities. However, these unique structures coupled with a childhood memory of planting corn in Africa and led her to enact her social consciousness through the founding of a nonprofit aimed at alleviating the suffering of others.

Altruistic Suffering

Freya developed a third structure during childhood related to her social consciousness: altruistic suffering. Altruistic suffering is more than empathy, which is defined as “a vicarious participation in other people’s emotions, ideas, or opinions” (Schantz, 2007, p. 51). Empathy is thought to be less than altruism because it lacks the urge towards action. However, altruism contains an orientation towards action, and in the case of Freya the action is towards the alleviation of suffering.

Freya’s experience of sensitivity towards suffering stemmed from her own unhappy childhood and the awareness of her mother’s suffering. As she stated, “We just always had to work. It was expected and you didn’t say...he didn’t abuse us, but we were spanked. You knew you’d get a spanking.” Although Freya indicated that she and her brothers were not abused, she reflected on her father’s treatment by saying, “He just wasn’t nice to [my mother]. He wasn’t nice to my older brother. He wasn’t nice to any of us. He just wasn’t a nice person.” Freya continued:

Even as a child, I don’t want to say that I hated my dad, but I was afraid of my dad. I didn’t like my dad, he was scary. I always wished he could go on business trips. He was mean to my mom. He did hit her once, because she didn’t want to

go up there—drive up 1,500 miles in northern British Columbia with three kids in the backseat [to] boss ranch guys around.

Freya remembered that even as a small child she wanted her mother to leave her father.

As she recalls, “Even when I was 10, I’d say ‘Mom leave dad, you can support us, you can be a schoolteacher....we can be okay’.” However, Freya’s mother never left her father. When I asked Freya to tell me about her, she responded, “I can’t really tell you who my mother is because growing up my mother was bossed around by my dad and now she’s too old to know who she is.”

Freya’s structure of altruistic suffering was further shaped in high school as she tried to alleviate her mother’s suffering by being a good student. She recalls this period in her life when she said:

I was in the top 3% and I just say that because I never skipped a day at school and I didn’t do drugs and I didn’t do cigarettes or anything like that. I remember consciously thinking I didn’t want to hurt my mother- my mother had enough pain. She didn’t need to have pain because of me. I dressed wild and I had all these pin curls. I got a pair of boots from the [thrift store], one was purple and one was pink. But I was in the top 3% of my class and I got a scholarship because I was in the top and you know, my mother never said ‘What are you doing, you can’t go to school [dressed] like that.’ My mother supported that and it was like, as long as my mother would support me being different, then I would support her and not do anything that would hurt her. I guess I thought that because I suffered, I thought my mother must surely suffer for being his wife, and so that’s why I was a good kid.

Freya’s connection to her mother’s suffering led her towards actions to alleviate this suffering. This dynamic formed a structure, what I am calling altruistic suffering, which played out in Freya’s adult life through the enactment of her social consciousness.

Although Freya’s other structures, hard work and frugality, were more subtly expressed in her social consciousness, her need to alleviate suffering is strongly

expressed in her social consciousness identity. She showed me some pictures of starving children from Africa she had clipped from a magazine and taped to her kitchen cupboards for five years. In referencing these pictures she said, “I feel like since they are suffering, I have to suffer—but it’s not a consciousness.” This sense of suffering and internalization of other’s suffering is certainly a strong sign of empathy (Shantz, 2007; Thompson, 2001b, 2007) but it has also affected her externalized personality as evidenced when she says, “I am a hard one to laugh. I really wish that I had a laugh that came easier because I’m more on the serious side, I’ll look at the victim—I feel for the victims.”

Although Freya communicated structures of altruistic suffering, she was clear that religious or spiritual concepts were not a part of her structural organization/social consciousness identity. As she noted, “I never had a calling for church. It’s not like I have this holy thing about helping people because of a Christian belief or something.” She goes on to state, “In all stages of my life...there are people who are less fortunate than I am. I want to make a difference. I want it to be ‘real.’ It is that innate desire I was born with.”

When I directly asked Freya about the development of her social consciousness, she foregrounds suffering as central to its development. According to Freya:

I think you have to have suffered. I don’t know, I’m sure there are books written about this so I’m just totally off the top of my head, but I think you have to have suffered and maybe reached some self-actualization. You have to believe that you can change the world and I think you probably have to have gone through some suffering. There are probably people who’ve gone through suffering and become rich and never help. But through suffering, I think you have to have a desire and belief that you can change the world.

In this statement, we see Freya’s structure of altruistic suffering being defined as central

to her concepts of self-actualization and the enactment of her social consciousness. Interestingly, during our interviews Freya did not tell stories of suffering in the African villages that her nonprofit serves. In fact, the only stories of suffering that emerged were her own childhood stories, which painted a picture of the emergence of her social consciousness shaped by an understanding of suffering and a desire to alleviate it. Her stories also showed her coupling her structure of altruistic suffering to people close to her, volunteer opportunities, and ultimately opportunities offered through her nonprofit to enact her social consciousness through the structural coupling of her organizational structure of altruistic suffering and ongoing opportunities in the environment to alleviate suffering in mutually specifying environments.

Freya's structural organization of hard work, frugality and altruistic suffering emerged in a childhood dominated by an emotionally abusive father who treated his three children and wife as paid labor rather than family. From a young age, Freya was expected and paid to care for her younger brother and with her earnings she was expected to clothe herself and pay for incidentals. This instilled a strong work ethic in her, but also a frugality with money that influenced her volunteerism because she preferred giving time to social justice causes rather than money. She chose social justice as a target for most of her volunteering rather than other forms of nonprofits because of her structural organization around altruistic suffering. Having experienced suffering and unhappiness in her own childhood and believing that her mother suffered greatly being married to her father, Freya committed herself to alleviating the suffering of others.

Joy's Enacted Social Consciousness

Joy is completing a Master's degree in Adult Education with a research focus on first generation college students. For more than twenty-five years she volunteered in a wide-range of nonprofits and served as the President of the Board for a regional Chapter of Habitat for Humanity, as well as serving as a board cochair member for a Performing Arts Foundation. Her current volunteer work involves writing small grants for a drop in tutoring center and tutoring at-risk youth.

Joy grew up the only child of a Catholic, working class family with a strong influence of liberal, social democratic, and working class values. Although her mother overstated their poverty, she also enforced messages of social justice and altruism but provided little emotional nurturance. In reflecting on her upbringing, Joy stated:

I lived in the lily white suburbs [and] my family had a very strong social democratic liberal point of view. We didn't eat lettuce because of Caesar Chavez and the farm worker's movement. We only wore American-made clothes. We were all about any kind of power struggle, particularly as it related to civil rights. All the Kennedys were God in our house.

Despite Joy's lower, middle-class upbringing, she attended an Ivy League school and ascended an upwardly mobile social and economic trajectory. This dynamic paired with the conditions of being an emotionally neglected, only child and contributed to the formation of three structural organizations that emerged in Joy's childhood: social mobility, privileged guilt and the quest for personal connections.

Social Mobility

Joy expressed the belief that all of her motivations for social justice were

cultivated in her youth and were influenced by the actions of her mother and aunt. In reflecting on this influence, she stated:

Even though we didn't have the means to be philanthropic...[my mother] certainly showed an empathy towards people with less power and privilege, even though she thought she virtually had no power and privilege. We went to church in the inner city. My dad didn't want to go, so we went to an all-black inner-city gospel church for several years...I was probably 8 to 10.

This passage reflects two dynamics. The first indicates the financial conditions of Joy's upbringing which was lower, middle-class and the second was an awareness of the power and privilege of those around her.

This awareness of power and privilege was predominately influenced by an aunt who had a strong influence on Joy's mother and consequently on Joy's upbringing. As Joy recalled:

[My mother] totally fell in step with the sister she thought was educated and informed. My mother's sister was a schoolteacher. She was grounded in civil rights and worker's rights. She was president of the American Federation of teachers [at the] local level, and had some national jobs. My mom just fell in step politically with her beliefs. Aunt Dolores spent every holiday and every summer vacation with us and had a very strong influence on my mother.

Joy's own mother was not as politically active as her aunt, but she ran for several local government posts as a placeholder for the Democratic Party because there would often be no opposition due to the fact that they lived in such a Republican area. This turned on a political awareness within Joy, but as politics are almost always tied to economics, it is important to note Joy's family's economic condition.

Joy's mother stayed at home until the family's finances could no longer support that situation. Her first job was in the nonprofit world in public radio and television. However, when Joy was in middle school her mother felt compelled to leave a job she

liked and was competent in to pursue another position because her father, an alcoholic, “was an unreliable income earner” and had “lost his job several times.” As Joy remembered, “she thought she could be a more significant breadwinner” so she took a promotion from a switchboard operator to sales, but she could not handle the stress of her new position. She was unable to return to her old position and in time “she just fell apart and ultimately went under psychiatric care [and eventually] she went on disability.”

When Joy’s mother had her breakdown, Joy did not feel she could leave her to go to college so she completed three semesters at a local community college. However, she surprised herself with how well she did in college and her structure of social mobility began to be enacted. As Joy recalled, “I think [my mother] was stable and I guess I surprised myself with how well I did in college. I realized I could do more than Niagara University.” Joy took advantage of opportunities available to first generation college students and transferred to Cornell University. In reflecting on these opportunities, Joy stated:

Neither of my parents went to college, so a lot of first-generation college students are considered the golden children. You are the one that is fulfilling their unfulfilled mission...their life income opportunities. I think for my parents, maybe they didn’t understand the distinction between a college degree and an Ivy League college degree, but I did. They were so supportive of the process—whatever direction I picked, I think it was okay. They were just happy I was in school thinking I am going to have a different trajectory than their own. Neither one of them felt very successful.

This passage informs an understanding of Joy’s structural organization around social mobility as it was influenced through the process of education and attending an Ivy League college. However, there were other influences that happened earlier in Joy’s life that shaped this structure of social mobility as well.

Joy's aunt took her to Europe three times to look at the great art of the world. As she recalls, "This was [a] remarkable, out-of-context experience for a girl from a lily white suburban, lower, middle-class family. I would not have that opportunity because that was not something my parents were going to be able offer me." This privileged look at the world and the experience of travel influenced the structural organization of social mobility. Because Joy saw and experienced a privileged world, even though she did not live in it, she would be able to envision it and create a structure that would enable her to couple with this world later in her life.

A final point of influence regarding Joy's structure of social mobility is messages from her mother regarding their poverty. As she states, "[There was] messaging from my mother that we were always poor and [I was] trying to right that experience, because I've kind of been that parent in the parent-child relationship since the teenage years." In other words, since Joy took on a parental role as a teenager when her mother had an emotional breakdown, she felt the responsibility of succeeding financially where both of her parents were failing. This sense of financial responsibility influenced the formation of her structural organization around social mobility and was first realized upon graduation from Cornell. As she recalled:

I had much more income than my parents. My potential, whether I had married John or someone else, was on a different trajectory. I think that kind of weighs heavily on me. I think I'm an empathic soul and I know at some level, my parents want that for me, but at some level...there's some jealousy there.

Joy's structure of social mobility presents interesting dynamics because most people only know the social class to which they are born. If they are born into a privileged class, they may never fully understand the working class experience. Conversely, if they never rise

above a working class experience, they may never experience privilege and philanthropy.

From a structural perspective, this social class movement presents some interesting questions. Is Joy's social consciousness identity structurally organized around her parent's social/economic class or the social/economic class to which she shifted? Interestingly, it appears that the structural identity of her social consciousness is rooted in her childhood social/economic class but became enacted through her adult social/economic class via structural coupling. This tension can be seen when she reflects on the change in her life circumstance and remembered thinking, "I'm not deserving of this sweet life." She also lived in a state of disbelief for a number of years, "waiting for the other shoe to drop" before reconciling herself to a life of financial wealth and comfort.

Understanding how Joy came to know and express her complex identity is the heart of embodied knowledge, but enactivist frameworks have been largely absent from contemporary epistemological research (Niessen et al., 2008) and thus provide little assistance in helping us understand Joy's complex self-expression. Nonetheless, what appears to have happened is that Joy's identity structure around social consciousness emerged in one social class (lower, middle) and was enacted in another social class (upper), both of which created identity class structures capable of enabling her to structurally couple with environments and coemerge her social consciousness. The ability to structurally navigate what could be conceived of as oppositional environments is interesting, but clearly Joy was able to specify her own boundaries within each environment (Baerveldt & Verheggen, 1999; Maturana & Varela, 1987). Nonetheless, in

the midst of transitioning from one social class to another, a further structural identity emerged: privileged guilt.

Privileged Guilt

Joy is clear that much of her motivation in the nonprofit sector has to do with guilt. As she said, “Blame is a natural experience in my family of origin and I think blame has a lot to do with guilt. I think the way to shirk yourself of that guilt around blame is by doing good works.” Once again, we see a structural dynamic shaped in childhood but enacted in adulthood in a variety of ways that structurally couple to environments and opportunities that coemerge learning related to social consciousness (Davis & Sumara, 1997; Sumara & Davis, 1997).

Although Joy has a passion for the Arts, most of her nonprofit volunteering “has been around people of need.” She recognizes this is a reaction to her belief, “that not all people live such a blessed life. What can I do? What can I do to make a difference?” We can see evidence of the structural organization around privileged guilt emerging from Joy’s dual class identities in the following passage referencing the “family value” of travel.

One of the reasons I wanted to note that family value is because my motivation to do nonprofit work is certainly a recognition that I am very fortunate....that I don’t have to work full-time and that I have the ability to give back. There is some guilt there because I come from pretty humble stock and I recognize that this is not a humble life [I live]. Just the ability to say that travel is a family value is elitist and it’s a notable conflict when you’re working on affordable housing initiatives and then leaving to go to the Caribbean. It’s just a lot of dissonance. I don’t really recall anyone throwing it up in my face, but it’s definitely something that is running around in the back of my mind.

From an enactivist point of view, Joy’s ability to maintain and enact somewhat

oppositional structural organizations around social class indicates that both identity structures are viable enough to exist in a consensual identity domain (Baerveldt & Verheggen, 1999).

We can see evidence of structural coupling when Joy resolves the shift from one socioeconomic class to another through an extreme commitment to volunteerism. As she remembered:

I lived in that kind of waiting for the other shoe to drop, until I just couldn't argue the fact that we were not going to be in the poor house. When it got to be realistic that that wasn't what the outcome would be, then the notion of cognitive dissidence set in for me and I would say that was when I was doing an amazing amount of volunteerism—when I had my hand in every possible volunteer opportunity.

As discussed in the previous section on social mobility, Joy navigated (and structurally couples with) dual class identities. Her social consciousness emerged out of a lower middle-class identity and has been enacted through volunteer initiatives with Habitat for Humanity, tutoring at-risk youth and research initiatives with first generation college students. On reflecting on the social justice influences of her parents and aunt, she stated:

Only in retrospect do I realize how profoundly they influenced what I've done as an adult because as an adult, since basically my marriage, I've really been smack dab in that demographic of white privileged upwardly mobile, and a lot of my selective activities have not matched that demographic.

In asking Joy how she managed to navigate dual identities, she confided, "I guess I always stayed on the outside, so I tend to cultivate friendships with [others on the outside]. I'm not attracted to that personality that is very upwardly mobile, that is concerned with show and looks. That just isn't interesting to me." Joy continued:

I've always played in the sand around those who were very successful...high ego, self-important individuals. We've always had a country club membership. That is

an environment that tends to attract self-important and successful egocentric profiles. The truth is I am pretty triggered by that high ego. I think on some unconscious level that I do this kind of work so that I will not wind up like them where I am the center and to be awed.

Several interesting dynamics are expressed in the above passage. First, Joy indicates that she cultivates close friendships with individuals on the “outside,” once again showing her structural ability to be socially agile across class lines. Second, she states that her nonprofit work is an unconscious reaction to the privileged class that she is exposed to, referencing again her structural organization of privileged guilt and a coping mechanism of living in this privileged class as not wanting to become self-important. This is an example of Joy defining viable boundaries for her own coemergent possibilities. As Baerveldt and Verheggen (1999) stated, “The boundaries of an autopoietic system are specified by its own operations” (p. 192).

Another interesting example of how Joy’s structure of privileged guilt structurally coupled in an insider/outsider fashion is seen when Joy moved to Mississippi. Joy’s structure of privileged guilt coupled to her relationship with her housekeeper Ms. Dot which created a powerful relationship for both because “issues of color and position and power are still very much present in that place.” As she remembered it:

I was a Yankee and I was in social relationships with a lot of natives—I didn’t see the world in the way they did, and I was doing some of this work thinking that I could teach those surrounding me a different way—which was very naïve and altruistic.

Nonetheless, because Joy’s social consciousness was so heavily influenced by her parent’s concepts of social democracy, she found herself, “pushing the envelope of socially accepted ways to interact with people of color” through her interactions with her

housekeeper Ms. Dot.

There were two aspects of structural coupling that the relationship with Ms. Dot provided. The first coupling was an outlet for Joy's structure of social mobility because as the wife an upwardly mobile executive and the mother of two young children, she recounts, "It was more difficult having a toddler, but I could've taken care of them. But apparently in Mississippi you are supposed to have help. So I got help."

The second opportunity provided for structural coupling was for Joy's privileged guilt. Because of Joy's upbringing and her strong social democratic beliefs, her relationship to Ms. Dot was an influential opportunity for her and was more than just an employer/employee relationship. Joy recounts a reunion between the two women sixteen years after their employment relationship in which she returned to Mississippi to tell Ms. Dot, "You taught me more about mothering and parenting than any living human being" and "Dot spent a lot of time talking about how different John and I were from most of the people she worked for, with the exception of the people she works for now." The structural coupling the relationship provided enabled Joy's social consciousness to coemerge through her lived experience in Mississippi as both employer and friend.

As Joy stepped into a privileged lifestyle, she "increasingly turned to volunteerism and nonprofit work as a way to equal the scales." In her efforts to structurally couple around privileged guilt, she committed herself to socially just causes and felt compelled to influence her children to become activists. As she related:

I was called to make a difference with people in need rather than with people who wanted more. What kind of an impact do you intend to have...want to make? That was very impactful in terms of my learning [and] me getting comfortable with the fact that one of the impacts I want to make is to really affect these incredible

DNA masses (children). That was really the first time I got comfortable with being an at-home mom.

Although Joy spoke a fair amount about the guilt of her privileged life, she actually underplayed the positive coemergent aspects of that guilt. It appears that Joy's feelings of privileged guilt drove her to seek out and couple with environments that enabled a positive expression through volunteerism. Additionally, she habituated her two children in philanthropy as a way to extend her own sense of responsibility to privilege into the next generation.

It is interesting to note that at no point did Joy exhibit a sense of entitlement, nor did she indicate conditioning her children in any form of entitlement—in fact quite the opposite. The following passage exhibits Joy's commitment to developing her children's social consciousness, but also represents a fine example of complex coemergence (Davis & Sumara, 1997; Davis et al., 2008; Sumara & Davis, 1997); indicating the way an environment and learner coemerge in mutually beneficial and unexpected ways.

What else I got out of it is we always had our kids involved and I can say this in retrospect, not that it was deliberate in the moment, but the fact that our two young adults really understand what it means to be either a grown-up or a good community member. That's another thing I get out of it—watching our families social consciousness develop. That's pretty satisfying.

Joy's influence over her children's social consciousness mirrored the influence that her mother and aunt exercised over her social consciousness. Furthermore, it reinforces her structure of privileged guilt that “requires” her in some fashion to give back and encourage those under her influence to also give back. In this way her structure of privileged guilt is coupling with her children and involving her children in philanthropy, but whether or not her children have developed a structure of privileged guilt, intrinsic

social concern or are simply complying with their mother's wishes from a structure of love and family obligation is unknown. What is noteworthy is the degree to which Joy was influenced by early family altruism and activism, thus her strategy for embedding these values (i.e., structures, in her children might be successful).

Personal Connections

Another dynamic affecting Joy's social consciousness is being an only child and raised by an emotionally barren mother. Reflecting on her childhood, Joy stated, "I have baggage as an only child... 'What do I have to do to get noticed here?'" As Joy noted, being an only child was "kind of remarkable, particularly from Roman Catholic parents who in their era it was their job to be baby machines...hard to believe that I couldn't get attention."

This need for attention and validation created a structural organization around the need for personal connections that played out in her motivations for nonprofit work as reflected in the statement:

I felt my mom loved [her aunt] more than she loved me. That message comes back in my nonprofit work in spades. I did some volunteer work on some corporate project work and I realized that I felt really worthless. I think that thread passes through a lot of my motivations about who to help and when and why.

Joy's self-reflection in this passage also indicates what Thom (2000) recognized as a high level of complexity in which "a living system is able to couple structurally to itself and create an inner world of consciousness, perception and emotions" (p. 22). Because Joy recognized her needs as an only child, her structural organization became "strategic" and "deliberate" and her reliance on friends was "much, much more significant." Thus, both

emotional neglect and a lack of siblings created a structural dynamic that compelled Joy to seek environments such as nonprofits through which she could find emotional validation and value connections. These environments enabled her to structurally couple her emerging upward mobility and a resulting privileged guilt as coemergent mechanisms that enabled the enactment of her social consciousness in new and unique ways.

Although Joy's relationship with her own children is positive and emotionally nurturing, being raised as an only child by an emotionally barren mother created a structural organization around the need for personal connections. Thus, as an adult Joy sought ways to structurally couple and enact her social consciousness through personal connections that created a sense of validation and importance.

Shortly after moving to Mississippi, Joy had an emotional break from her mother that had a dramatic influence on her nonprofit volunteerism. As she recounted in our interview sessions, "I'm clearly saying that my parent's divorce and the cut off with my mother had a fair amount of impact on the degree to which I became active in social justice causes in Mississippi." Although as an adult, Joy recognized that her mother was "broken," the lack of attention and support she received in her childhood created a structural dynamic that required Joy to structurally couple with situations in which she would feel validated. Joy described this dynamic in the following passage.

When my parents were divorcing and my mother was so resentful of me having any relationship with my father, there was a complete cut off for almost a year between my mom and I. I mean, if your mother doesn't love you...that's pretty big stuff. You know that you want your mom to love you and when that's not part of your reality, you're going to go looking for validation in other places, in ways that can make you feel whole again.

As a result of her mother's rejection, Joy structurally coupled to volunteerism as a way to

enact her emotional need for validation through her social consciousness. Joy's sophistication in resolving the dynamics with her mother point to another aspect of structural coupling around family dynamics—being raised an only child.

Because Joy moved a lot, she recognized, “the importance of developing nonfamily relationships,” understanding that if she was “going to be happy in a new place, [she would] have to cultivate relationships.” She also realized that she “used [her] sense of giving back as an activity to help [her] isolation after physical moves.” Joy understood that if she had had siblings, she would have had a different structure to help her navigate her moves, but also if she had not moved as often as she had, she may not have thrown herself into volunteerism with such fervor. It was the unique coupling of Joy's structure of being raised an only child and the need for emotional validation with new physical environments in ready need of volunteers that coemerged Joy's social consciousness in activities, actions, interactions and identities uniquely her own (Fenwick, 2003).

Joy's unique structures of social mobility, privileged guilt and the need for personal connections emerged from her lived experiences. Her childhood was shaped by emotional neglect, the dynamics of being an only child with lower, middle-class economics, but social democratic values. Childhood structures of social mobility were influenced by international travel and exposure to privilege. They were further influenced by a mother who overstated family poverty and placed Joy in a parenting role, needing to fulfill the financial expectations of a disabled mother and an alcoholic father. Emerging from Cornell with a bright and upwardly mobile future, Joy navigated the tension

between her privilege and the values she was raised with through extraordinary volunteerism, a commitment to other, and the desire to instill similar values in her children. She utilized service and social justice to engage in personal healing through connections that were supportive and gave her a sense of importance. Furthermore, Joy questioned the validity of her structural couplings as expressions of authenticity as demonstrated in the following passage.

In general I would say that I have a belief that a lot of the privilege that comes with success is inauthentic and yes I've swam in that pond, but just like knowing what you don't want to do...that was knowing that I didn't want to be. Do you sometimes have to put on a mask of inauthenticity to navigate in an inauthentic environment? You do if you want to be a pragmatist.

This reflection and insight is an example of how Joy's social consciousness has coemerged through the structural couplings provided by the myriad volunteer opportunities through which she has engaged. Joy's story provided a unique consideration of how her particular structural dynamics shaped her nonprofit motivations and interactions and contributed to her distinctive social consciousness.

Julia's Enacted Social Consciousness

Julia founded her nonprofit in 1999, which is a youth development program for children between the ages of 8 and 17 that uses expressive arts and group interaction techniques to help children find positive modes of personal expression. Her nonprofit reaches out to children who are struggling with economic, social, or emotional pressures and assists them in identifying and expressing their feelings and understandings through art and group interactions.

Julia was born in Charlottesville, Virginia, as the eldest of three children spaced 21 months apart. The year after her youngest brother was born, her mother was admitted to a psychiatric hospital in New York because she was hearing voices and trying to control these voices by staying up at night writing down what they were saying. She was later diagnosed as psychotic but remained in the hospital for three years because of attachments she formed with women during her stay in the treatment facility. At this time in history, bisexuality was also considered a mental illness, which extended the treatment she was receiving. Her mother's history created a childhood environment that shaped three learning structures that influenced the development of Julia's social consciousness: mental illness, abandonment, and authenticity.

Mental Illness

A central and strong organizing structure for Julia's social consciousness stems from her mother's mental breakdown when she was five years old. As she asserts, "I'm pretty sure that my mother had a lot to do with my social consciousness and my directions in life for good and for bad." As a child, Julia felt the pain of her mother's illness as a "death" of a former, happy life, but unlike a death, the specter of mental illness hung over the family through her mother's continued behavior.

As Julia recalled, her mother had been "a very artistic, dreamy kind of personality." She was also serious and very thoughtful and told Julia that "she was a free spirit but was too scared generally to assert it." Julia also indicated that her mother was "very socially conscious and really carried the guilt of the southern whites and what had been going on with the blacks." In reflecting on her mother's personality, the racial

tensions of the South and how this influenced her mental illness, Julia stated:

She thought it was wrong, and she was such a sensitive person. She did everything that she could do. I think that was part of her personality. She was born at the wrong time—a very sensitive, artistic, intellectual person that saw the inequities and maybe the guilt was she couldn't do enough. I think just being in the hospital so long had a lot to do with some of her paranoia. I don't think it was all bipolar. I think it was this feeling of being different—they didn't have any medication. That's why she was there so long and also because she was attracted to women- which was [considered] another part of the illness. She was an adapter and they thought even that was weird.

Julia's awareness of her mother's social consciousness as related to mental illness certainly emerged later in her life through reflection and perhaps conversations with her mother, but even as a child her mother's mental illness shaped her. For example, Julia recalls an influential memory of her mother trying to intensely explain things to her when she was a very small child.

I do remember her at one point...a memory that I have of standing in a wing back chair and her talking very seriously to me, explaining things to me. I must've been four and a half or five and I think she was probably getting ill and just trying to keep it together. She was doing a lot of crying.

This passage and the fact that Julia recalled it so vividly indicate that Julia was aware as a child that something was wrong with her mother and affected by this awareness despite not fully understanding what her mother was going through.

Julia's mother had wanted to be a writer and live in New York, but due to family pressures, marriage and a string of pregnancies she found herself in a very different situation. Julia stated that her mother "had this great desire to use her brain" but "she was not organized, so caring for three kids without a lot of conveniences that we have today was hard,...and it was all very contrary to her personality." In describing her mother's mental illness, Julia stated:

When my mother was getting so bad, she would stay up at night typing what the voices said to her, to sort of show them on paper. This is before she went into the hospital. She had three children, my father would come home late and she wouldn't want to wake him up and she couldn't tell him what was going on with her, so she would stay up at night and type what the voices were saying. Finally she was so distressed by what was going on with her that she asked a neighbor to take care of us and she got on a train and went to Charlottesville to go to the hospital at the University of Virginia.

Julia's mother never returned home because after the doctors assessed her they felt she should be immediately admitted.

As Julia recalled, the "family was torn apart" because of this mental illness which resulted in anger because "mental illness was not something anybody understood."

Although Julia's mother's mental illness caused herself and other's a great deal of pain, in time it enabled her to connect with a freer lifestyle. As Julia remembered:

At the time my mother came out of the hospital, she really wanted some freedom. She had been befriended by some women in the hospital who were lesbian and she was probably bisexual. She told me she was there for so long and she longed for comfort and affection. They were really drawn to her because she was pretty and sweet.

Julia was 5 when her mother entered the hospital, 8½ when she left the hospital, and 10 when she started living with her again. Throughout these formative years, mental illness became an organizing structure in Julia's childhood. This structure was formed by visits to her mother in the hospital and by overhearing hearing family members say things like, "Oh, that poor thing—going to [see] that crazy woman."

Mental illness as an organizing structure created a great deal of insecurity in Julia's childhood. She coped with this insecurity by determining to 'control' the effects of mental illness as shown in the following passage.

I made up my mind when I'd just turned 10. I was a latchkey child because I had

just moved from my grandmothers to living with my mother in a little one bedroom apartment. I remember walking home from school and saying “I’m never going to let myself be surprised again.”

Julia’s determination to control the effects of mental illness in her own life creates a structural organization related to identity that plays out or ‘couples’ with various family members throughout her life, but this desire to control mental illness also affected her career path.

As a nurse, Julia is drawn to public health and psychiatry, but most importantly prevention rather than treatment. In reflecting on her career choices, she recognizes the influence her mother had on her decisions to go into psychiatric nursing.

I think a lot of my life is a corrective experience for what my mother experienced, not intentionally, but on some psychic level. I’ve been driven to carry out some of what her desires were, I mean, I know that sounds strange but that’s just from an analytical perspective. Certainly me being drawn to psychiatry was very much this.

Julia’s reference to “being driven” to carry out certain desires points to aspects of environmental coupling with cognitive structures (Varela et al, 1991), in which structures seek appropriate viable environments by which they may couple and evolve (Maturana & Varela, 1987; Thompson, 2007).

As mentioned in the previous section, Julia developed a structure organized around controlling mental illness as it affected her personally and as it affected others through psychiatric prevention programs. This is an interesting example of what Baerveldt and Verheggen (1999) called “personal functioning within particular intentional worlds, and in the interpersonal maintenance of intentional worlds” (p. 185), and we will explore both aspects of Julia’s structure and the ways in which she coupled to

her environment.

In terms of controlling how mental illness influenced her life, Julia tried, “not to be like mother” and structurally coupled to careful planning. Unfortunately, she found this was not a viable option when it came to getting pregnant. As she recounts, “I had planned my life so carefully” but she was having difficulty getting pregnant and that she “couldn’t control this was very frustrating.” She further reflects, “I think this was one of my journeys in life...letting go.”

Julia did eventually have three children and her need to control mental illness extended to them. However, despite this need to keep mental illness from affecting her family, her eldest son struggled with drug abuse and depression, and her daughter dropped out of school and ran away from home with a controlling and abusive boyfriend. Even with her training she felt powerless to affect the situation as she explains in this passage.

This was exactly the opposite of what I had set my life to be—that my children were going to be healthy and not be affected by mental illness. I was going to be healthy. It just seems like it was crossing my path constantly and I didn’t have control over it, that was the theme.

The coupling that takes place in this passage and the previous passage regarding pregnancy is Julia’s recognition that she has no control over mental illness and therefore the structural identity she formed when she was ten requiring her to maintain control to avoid hurt from mental illness becomes unviable (Maturana & Varela, 1987). This form of structural coupling in which Julia gains a perceptual recognition of her own limitations is a coupling with herself (Thom, 2000) and represents a high level of complex coemergence based on self-awareness and a breakdown of worldviews (Schlitz et al.,

2010). In other words, her identity structure around controlling mental illness and how it would affect her personally eventually breaks down; in part, because she continued to have mental illness in her environment but had not yet developed the structures to help herself or others. She developed the structures that eventually led to her own strong mental health through her work in prevention.

Julia's structural organization around coping with mental illness was primarily and extensively expressed through a focus on the prevention aspects of mental illness. As a student she studied public health and psychiatry and "would spend extra hours in the library reading everything." Her structural coupling to prevention was motivated by her mother's experience as noted in the following text.

What I learned in college was that psychology and education were my strengths. I like knowing about health, but it was more in prevention. Prevention has always been my interest, and certainly this was motivated by my experience and with my mother's mental health. Prevention just makes sense to me.

This experience as a student laid the foundation for later career moves, the first of which was a job training volunteers in a Systematic Training for Effective Parenting program. Julia states this "was a hugely pivotal job" and what the foundations of her nonprofit were built on.

Julia's belief in the importance of this job is interesting because it represents the non-linear dynamics of coemergent systems (Davis et al., 2000). There is no way Julia could have known that the job she was taking could have had such an influence on the foundation of a nonprofit she started many years later. However, her structure coupled with this particular job and enacted learning from it that was somehow greater and more powerful than learning she had experienced in other jobs, other opportunities, and other

environments. Not only did this job trigger something in her (Proulx, 2008), it also seemed to make her sensitive to future triggers, as seen in the following passage.

From the point I'm talking about, from then on everything I looked for in my career was really to integrate everything that I had experienced. Certainly I was a more effective therapist because I'd had my own grief and brokenness. I was conscious of the art of therapy.

In this way, Julia's structural organization of mental illness that she experienced in both her personal and work environments supported the coemergence of a focus on the prevention of mental illness. This focus on prevention eventually resulted in the formation of a nonprofit that helps children go beyond their own trials through the use of expressive arts and interpersonal understanding.

Abandonment

Another structure that emerged in Julia's childhood is abandonment. Due to the abrupt way in which her mother's mental illness affected the family structure, Julia experienced several periods of upheaval which shaped a structural organization around abandonment. The first experience of abandonment was when she was five and her mother was admitted to a mental hospital. As Julia remembers, "Everything had seemed happy...and then things crashed." She further recalled:

I remember walking into the house and it was empty and I was crying, wanting the stuffed animal that I was really attached to. I just remember looking for, I think it was a lamb. I realized later and I've gone to that memory and done a lot of crying about it...just aware that it was like losing a parent entirely. It was a death and then there was going to school and explaining where my mother was, saying that "she's in the hospital" and not really understanding what was going on.

Even though Julia's mother did not die, her abrupt departure from her life felt like a death and perhaps the shame surrounding her departure compounded Julia's sadness because

there was no ability to grieve or openly discuss her mother's life or circumstances.

An additional loss was added two years later when her beloved grandfather, a Virginia Senator, suddenly passed away during his Christmas break from Congress. Julia remembered:

When my grandfather died, he had come home from Washington. It was around Christmas time and he had been home for about a day or two and had a heart attack—it was not expected, he was 72. It was like he had come home and he was there and then he wasn't. That was also the way it was with mother because we'd been at the neighbors and then she was hospitalized in Charlottesville.

Julia had been named after this paternal grandfather and remembered that he adored her. Although he worked weeks in Washington, he returned to Virginia on the weekends and his death was a huge loss for her. Even though she was only seven when he died, she reflected that this “was my first awareness of the permanence of death.”

These early losses created a structural organization around abandonment that was often enacted through the need to make connections. As Julia stated, “Connections are a theme in my life, because of the way my family was split apart and I was in this isolated position with my mother.” This isolated position was established when she was ten and “it was decided” that she would live with her mother. Although she had lived with her grandparents for almost 5 years, Julia experienced yet another form of abandonment when she was relocated to her mother's apartment.

She had been settled into her grandmother's house and as she remembers, “I was getting ready to leave, [and] it was really scary. I would try to eat breakfast and I would throw up. The anxiety was huge.” Julia's experiences of having felt abandoned as a small child due to her mother's mental illness and then having to leave her grandparent's home

once she had settled in, reinforced a structural organization around abandonment. This structure can be observed in the following passage.

I have a commitment not to abandon...especially children. At one point I was working with the chronically mentally ill and I was in burnout constantly because I couldn't give up on them. I was trying to help them. Children have a lot more hope so I learned patience and I learned delayed gratification. But I think I learned to not totally trust that things would work out, I think this is a theme that I learned when I was 10.

Julia's structural organization around abandonment was formed in childhood but was structurally coupled throughout her adult life in both her personal and professional relationships. This structure and its coupling formed a strong foundation for the unique way in which Julia's social consciousness was enacted.

Julia's intentions towards children can clearly be traced to her own structural organization around childhood abandonment. Growing up, Julia structurally coupled through a desire to belong and not be left on the fringe as seen in the following passage.

I wanted to belong. I didn't want to be different. As I think about it, in my whole growing up I felt different and I wanted to be part of the group. I was aware, my observing ego was quite aware, that it was important for me to be involved in leadership, organizing, or anything that was going to be happening because I didn't like feeling on the fringe.

Despite her effort to fit in, Julia admits, that "belonging is something that I always struggled with," but also something that influenced forming her nonprofit so that other children would feel a sense of belonging.

As Julia entered her professional career, her abandonment identity structurally coupled with her role as a clinical nurse for the chronically mentally ill. She remembers being in "constant burnout" because she was too close to what she saw of her mother. She also felt she could not walk away from a patient because of her abandonment issues.

As she said:

I never wanted anyone to feel that way. It's very hard for me. I won't abandon someone. I mean, I will bend over backwards to follow-up with them to be sure that they don't feel abandoned. If they leave me that's different.

According to Julia, abandonment, especially abandonment related to mental illness is related to inclusivity and to her “social justice is that inclusivity and the willingness to believe in inclusivity.” Thus, we see Julia's social consciousness enacted through a complex coemergence of abandonment structures coupled with mental health dynamics through an extreme commitment to “other.”

One such extreme commitment can be seen in Julia's unhealthy marriage. She admits in retrospect, it would have been better for her if she had turned Robert's marriage proposal down, but she “didn't want to hurt his feelings, and I needed the security” indicating the structural dynamics of abandonment at play in her relationship with her husband. These dynamics continued to influence their married life, even when the marriage became troubled. As Julia recalled:

I had committed myself that I would stick with the marriage. Loss was such an issue for me because of my childhood, I couldn't bring myself to leave him. Although I was beginning to see that he was as lonely as I was. It wasn't a good marriage.

Interestingly, despite the unhappiness of the marriage, Julia remained committed until her husband asked for a divorce. In retrospect she acknowledges, “I didn't have a model for a good marriage so I didn't know what it was supposed to look like,” indicating that a lack of structural coupling to a positive marital ideal enabled her to stay structurally coupled to an unhappy marriage. This concept is further supported when she says, “I don't think I believed him. I don't think I took him seriously. I think I projected what I wanted to see

instead. I didn't want him to be that way, so he just wasn't." These statements get at the phenomenological roots of the enactive approach (Thompson, 2007; Varela et al., 1991), which indicate an organizing construct of structural coupling is that the structure enables which world can be brought forth. As such, Julia did not see her husband as he was, she saw him as she wanted him to be.

Authenticity

Another structure that developed in Julia's childhood is the desire for authentic expression. Julia's family heritage is the first families of Virginia, which as she described is "very controlled Virginia culture—everybody smooths everything over and you wear the right clothes and all of that." Julia's grandmother was the first child of Lyon Gardiner Tyler, who is John Tyler's (the 10th American President's) first son and the president of William and Mary College. Julia's grandmother was extremely bright and went to Wellesley but then she came back to Virginia and married. She had an ability to lead and so she did it with her children, trying to mold Julia's mother into a social debutant.

The pressure to conform to the social expectations of Julia's family heritage created "constant conflict" in her quest for self-expression. She describes a humorous childhood event in which she was hiding in a trashcan during a game of hide and seek and her grandparents drove up to the front of the house. She "popped out of the garbage can," but her mother was "embarrassed and horrified."

While living with her grandparents, Julia's sense of "proper behavior" was enforced by a grandmother who treated her "like a doll" and who was "very critical." Her grandmother controlled who Julia played with, but designed elaborate costumes for her

birthday parties. As Julia reflects on this history, she states, “I was pretty spoiled really. I was grateful that I didn’t end up like that.” Perhaps the reason Julia did not end up a product of old Virginia culture is the structural organization around authentic expression her mother influenced.

When Julia left her grandmother’s home to live with her mother, she remembers the challenges she encountered with her mother’s influence.

She was an artist and she didn’t have any problem walking around the apartment nude. I had been in this very Victorian household and my grandmother was extremely strict. I was extremely embarrassed [because our apartment was] next to the playground.

Julia recognizes a schism in the modes of self-expression she was raised to believe in by her grandmother and those demonstrated by her mother. However, her mother also modeled a mode of self-expression that would become central to Julia’s social consciousness structure. As Julia recounted, “she told me always to talk about my feelings.”

Conversely, Julia was feeling pressured by her father and stepmother and everyone with different values who “were always asking questions about how my mother was.” She claims that she was a people pleaser and that she “was always looking to see what other people were thinking.” Being exposed to her mother who was attempting authentic self-expression and encouraging her daughter to do the same influenced the structural organization of authenticity; however, she was also caught in a situation of molding herself to other’s expectations.

Julia’s situation represents an interesting structural bifurcation in which the old Virginia identity structure remains dominant for much of Julia’s life, but an emergent

authentic identity structure begins to compete for viability (Davis et al., 2000), “leaving old choices unviable in the unfolding system dynamics” (Fenwick, 2001, p. 255). The tension between these structures can be seen when Julia said:

I was afraid to go out too far. There was a lot of anxiety. I didn't have a clear sense of confidence of who I was and I was paying more attention to other people's rules and what I should do.

In time, however, Julia structurally couples with environments that enable her to coemerge authentic self-expression and enact her social consciousness.

For example, as Julia was gaining clearer vision about her relationships, she was doing the same for herself. As mentioned previously, her social consciousness was structurally organized around authentic self-expression, but in early childhood these messages were clearly mixed between her mother and grandmother as can be seen in the following passage.

I'm an adventurer. I think this is true of my mother too, that she was caught in the bind between what she just wanted to do and to express herself within this very rigid rule system of proper Virginia...the first families of Virginia and what you did and what you didn't do. When we moved to California, even though I wasn't doing anything extreme, I felt so free. Because I didn't have to worry about what are we supposed to wear to that party.

Julia notes that when moving to California she is able to structurally couple with a freer environment. Previously, she was “always looking to see what other people were thinking” and “giving in to what I thought people were expecting,” but in California Julia found herself able to take more leadership roles and explore professional growth.

She was the only school nurse for a rural school district teaching sex education. As she remembers, “I had a chance to be creative and it gave me an awareness of really enjoying independence and having creative ideas as a professional. I began thinking I

really want to get my Master's degree." This passage indicates a growing confidence as a result of Julia's coemergence through the environment of her work, her creativity and self-expression.

This confidence continued to coemerge through a career environment in which Julia was able to self-express and structurally couple her growing need for authenticity with training opportunities and supervisor support. She remembered this time fondly.

In the mental health job where I was feeling encouraged and nurtured to be everything I wanted to be and to be creative and to make the job, I was really nurtured by my super good supervisor and was gaining a lot of career confidence and sense of self and [to find] what my strengths were.

During this time, Julia was gaining confidence and finding herself in "a state of increasing evolution and awareness." She also structurally coupled to therapy as a mechanism for "self-actualization" and reflected, "I have always been grateful that I felt I had this inner drive that kept me doing things that would be healthy for me and becoming more of who I was supposed to be." Because of Julia's willingness to enter therapy and find authentic expression, her structural organization around authentic expression shifted, grew and coemerged through experience, struggle, doubt, success and growth in confidence—ultimately resulting in a nonprofit that helps children find and express their own authentic identities through art.

Julia's unique structure of mental illness, abandonment and authenticity were formed in childhood through the dual influences of her mother's admittance to a mental health facility and the first Virginia family heritage that influenced her upbringing. Because of the lack of authentic self-expression deemed appropriate in her family, which probably contributed to her mother's loss of mental health, Julia struggled to find her

own authentic voice and to define healthy relationships throughout her life. Despite and because of this struggle, she studied psychiatric nursing and defined a path that shaped her interaction with social justice causes based on a commitment to addressing mental health issues through prevention via authentic expression. The exploration of authentic expression related to mental health has influenced the formation of her nonprofit which is in its thirteenth year of operation. The abandonment issues she confronted as a child shaped a structural organization that continues to drive her commitment to children, but this commitment is shaped through her nonprofit work which has now served over 4000 children.

Grace's Enacted Social Consciousness

Grace was very active in the farmworker's movement in California in the 1970s and was instrumental in many grassroots political campaigns for social justice. In the 1980s her focus shifted to environmental causes through recycling education and citing socially just landfill projects. Her current interests encompass public involvement in participatory decision making through engaged dialogue.

Grace's parents were a dynamic pair of career climbers. Her father played a pivotal role in the surrender of the WWII submarine that carried the enigma decoding machine and her mother was a secretary to the White House who transcribed the Japanese surrender documents after the bombing of Japan. Despite their intelligence and apparent career success, Grace believed they played the roles of narcissist and con narcissist in their relationship to each other and to the larger world. As she stated:

It wasn't like we were one big family. It was like the parents and those kids. I think my father was a narcissist and I think she was a con narcissist where she felt important if she was with a narcissist. Together they had an almost unnatural closeness, where he always felt extra important. She idolized him [and if] she was with a man she idolized then she was really important.

According to Grace's perspective of her parents as narcissists, they created a childhood environment that shaped structures around decision making, responsibility and a desire for holistic relationships.

Decision Making

For Grace, an interesting structure emerged from her childhood regarding necessity and choice. Choice is related to the ability to make good decisions but Grace felt her "father limited [her] decision options" by his violent actions toward her and the limitations he placed on her decision-making opportunities. Consequently, Grace's structural organization around decision making was shaped by two influencing constructs: the necessity of reacting to environmental concerns and the lack of choice due to an overbearing father who made decisions without involving her.

The necessity of reacting to environmental concerns (survival) was dramatically structured when Grace was fifteen and her father tried to kill her while her mother encouraged him. A full description of this event is important because it informs an understanding of the environment that shaped her and her need to learn from and react to this environment.

So at that time he was drunk and my mother was complaining about me...just finding fault in her mind. My father just got in a rage and he started kicking my head in, saying "I'm going to kill you. I'm going to kill you." My mother just sat there saying "Do it Charlie, do it. Just kill her." I was crawling around protecting my head. I don't even remember what room I was in. Then, I don't know,

something clicked in me. [I thought] I'm responsible for me. Whether it was a gift of spirit...I mean there's always been a lot of [spiritual] help for me. I said, "Fine, you can do this. I'm going to be dead probably in 20 minutes if you keep this up and what are you going to do? Are you going to hide the body? Are you to wrap me up? Are you going to bury me in the backyard? What are you going to tell the neighbors where I've gone? What are you to tell your sisters what happened?" and my mother said to Charlie, "You'd better stop." At that moment it was just like, "I can't rely on these people—they're crazy."

Grace's early traumatic encounter with violence in her home formed a structural organization around decision-making tied to survival. Consequently, she recognized "it was never safe to be there" so she "took every babysitting job [she] could get" and "tried to get out of the house every chance [she] could." These statements indicate decision-making based on a need to protect herself from harm.

Grace's structural organization of decision-making tied to survival became enacted through her need to get out of the house after her father threatened her life. Interestingly, these opportunities provided Grace with her first formal exposures to social justice programs and thus we see a unique structural coupling of her decision to avoid her home by spending time in nonprofit environments and a resulting enactment of social consciousness. Grace remembers these dynamics when she said:

When I was in my senior year of high school, President Johnson had a program for young people, top achievers, to go into elementary schools and teach school for three hours after school. So from 3 to 6 p.m., I had a class of six third-graders. I was privileged and I lived in the fanciest subdivision in Fremont, [but] it was a paid job. With my family situation, I had to buy my own clothes and my own food, so it was a job and it was great. I had these darling kids and my job was to bring them up to grade level and teach them hygiene and just dote on them. I had children of different ethnic backgrounds. They just adored me and I just adored them.

This part-time job coupled with Grace's decision-making structure based on survival and a resulting awareness coemerged such that Grace felt she "became an adult and a

responsible person.” As a result of this interaction and the need to maintain the viability of her structural coupling (Thompson, 2007; Varela et al., 1991), she extended her efforts into additional volunteer work and “was the San Francisco Bay area leader of the Danny Thomas teenagers march against leukemia” during her senior year in high school. In remembering this time, she states, “I really started volunteering more and finding my own path.”

Despite Grace’s assertion that she began finding her own path, a second and limiting aspect of decision-making remained structurally defined by early childhood dynamics. The second childhood dynamic that influenced Grace’s decision making structure was the fact that she was never involved in decision making processes. For example, after the incident in which Grace’s father attempted to kill her, she recalls, “They never talked to me. They never talked to me about my plans. They just kind of stopped talking to me.”

Without parents to help her make decisions and process her choices, Grace’s structure of decision making related to survival and safety would govern her decisions as seen in the following quote regarding where she chose to attend college.

How I figured out where I wanted to go—I took a string and put it as far away from home as I could with the worst public transportation. It was a 5½ hour drive from the Bay Area. Santa Barbara is very isolated, there is no train—there is a bus. I didn’t want to have to come home. I didn’t have a car. I had a bike.

Thus, Grace made an important life choice, where to attend college, not based on the programs offered, the reputation of the institution or the support she would find there, but instead on the inability to return to her family home. Although Grace had a wonderful time in Santa Barbara, when her mother died in the middle of her Freshman year, she had

to return to her father's home to take care of her youngest brother. Once again, she was not involved in the decision, which reinforced her structure of struggling with the ability to make informed decisions based on her needs and desires. In recalling this dynamic she stated:

After my mother died, my dad just assumed I would come home and take care of everything. My aunt Burma stayed for a couple of weeks and then he hired the neighbor lady to look in after my brother. She told him it would only be till June, so he made a decision—that was my dad. He was very unilateral, no input...that was the decision. I had no relationship with the man and I was frightened of him. Without my mother there I didn't know what he was capable of.

This passage indicates an important but unfortunate dynamic in which Grace is treated like a pawn on a chess board, to be moved around at her father's convenience. Because Grace's needs and interests are not considered in these decisions and because she is not included in the decision making process, her structure for decision making continues to revert to survival mechanisms.

For example, when Grace was 20, her father, whose home she was living in and taking care of while she simultaneously attended school and cared for her 10-year-old brother, lost his job and was planning to move to Oregon without her. As she recalled:

My father said "I'm moving to Oregon in six weeks." I said "Dad, well what am I going to do?" I said, "Tell me about this house." He said, "There are two bedrooms." And I said "Well there's not room for me is there?" and he said "No, you're not coming"—I wasn't invited.

As a result of not being involved in the decisions regarding where she would live, her structural organizations of decision-making tied to survival structurally coupled with a security option that had been presented to her. As she recalls, "I couldn't find a job and [my husband] had proposed. I thought 'I'll make this work.' So I married my husband—

he was my brother's roommate.

Within 6 weeks, Grace knew the marriage was a mistake, but she may not have realized the degree to which her structural organization limited the choices to which she was able to structurally couple (Capra, 1996; Maturana & Varela, 1987; Varela et al., 1991). As stated, she had been in a relationship with a father who unilaterally made decisions and she was forced to react. She married the same kind of man, which can be seen when she says, "He signed a contract to stay in the central California Valley without talking to me. He just made decisions that didn't have anything to do with how I wanted to live my life."

Fortunately for Grace, she began to structurally couple with new opportunities and environments which enacted growth in her structural organization around decision-making towards choice rather than necessity. This first opportunity came when Grace worked for Planned Parenthood and is described in the following passage.

I innovated this choice method where I taught [students] how to make choices and how to use birth control. It was really a rich time for me. I went to the high schools and developed this choice program. I would do a session on how to make choices and then a session on birth control. The section the students always wanted to talk to me about was the one on choices.

This passage demonstrates an interesting complex coemergence (Davis & Sumara, 1997; Davis et al., 2000; Sumara & Davis; 1997) of Grace's structural organization around decision making, her own history of unplanned pregnancy, a high school sex education environment, and a resulting enacted social consciousness around decision making that would heavily influence her life. This enacted social consciousness can be seen when Grace stated:

I think the other thing is I learned to own myself and my behavior and be totally responsible for my decisions good or bad and the consequences they bring. It was a bad decision to marry Karin's dad. I certainly got a beautiful child—that was my decision. My father limited my decision options, but I made that one. I was tired and I think I wanted to be loved.

This willingness to take responsibility for decisions is not only at the heart of an evolving structural organization around decision-making, but also becomes a defining construct in her social consciousness. As Grace moved into a career in public planning, she was struck by the lack of involvement in decision making she witnessed by others. In getting involved in approving a riverside trail project, Grace noticed:

What I was so taken with was just how absent from the political process the public is and I think this is something I have continued in my professional life. I am a certified professional for public participation. I went through training courses [with] the International Association of Public Participation.

This awareness indicates a “trigger” (Proux, 2008) from Grace's environment that begins to coemerge her structure of decision-making. Simultaneously, Grace's environment alters because of her dawning understanding about decision-making. In other words, both change (coemerge) as a result of her awareness because learning takes place through Grace's commitment to evolve her understanding of decision-making and to affect decision-making environments.

She recognized that what “was missing from the planning process was the community involvement” so as a certified public planner Grace had community members “come to the table and bring important points up in the public setting [to] acknowledge them.” To Grace, planning “comes back to decision processes. That's what public involvement is—decision work.” From these quotes we see that Grace has continued to couple her structures of decision-making to environments and opportunities that enacted

growth far beyond its origins of survival to a current focus on inclusivity in public involvement. As she reflects over her career and life, she recognizes these changes as a “common theme—it’s been decision-making and inclusive decision-making, both in politics, my work, my volunteer work.”

Responsibility

Another identity structure that emerged from Grace’s childhood was an organization around responsibility to “other.” Her earliest remembrance of this responsibility occurred shortly after her little brother’s birth when she was ten. As she recalls, her mother told her,

“Now you’re old enough, you’re not a child anymore. Your job is to take care of your brother and to help me cook and clean.” By the time I was in fifth grade, I was told to get out of Girl Scouts and I took care of John—always, he was my assignment. Probably from the time he was nine months old, I changed his diapers, I folded his clothes, I started dinner, I made desserts.

This extreme responsibility to family extended beyond housework. As Grace recounted, “Everything was about service to family...they wanted to play bridge, so when I was in ninth grade I learned to play competitive bridge—this was the family.”

This responsibility to family often entailed keeping up appearances while simultaneously diminishing her own childhood needs and desires. Grace recalls this dynamic when she stated:

We had a fancy house, but she was always complaining about money and telling us we couldn’t have things because of money. I didn’t get a bicycle until fourth grade and I only got that because the neighbors were going to give me one, and she was embarrassed and got mad at me for embarrassing her. “Children don’t need this. You don’t need this, you need to be home helping me.” I had almost all hand-me-down clothes.

Grace was not sure if her mother's money worries were real or manufactured because she identified her family as "financially comfortable" with a large home and recreational boat. Nonetheless, her mother's financial messages influenced Grace's structure of responsibility as it related to money, which became a difficult burden for her to carry. In the following passage we see Grace's structure of responsibility, coupled with difficult family dynamics, begin to enact a shift in her social consciousness and awareness of a larger world.

This is the point of disillusionment with everything I had been led to believe about the fairness and goodness of the world. That it wasn't for everybody. Perhaps in my own life it wasn't for me anymore. I think the world became a little bit heavy at this point. You know my parents stopped supporting me as far as clothes or lunch money. I had to work and make my own money and take care of my brother. It was a lot of responsibility—I had a lot of responsibilities.

This awareness of unfairness and inequity is introduced to Grace through her own structures of responsibility as well as exposure to volunteer opportunities with less privileged populations as was explored in the previous section.

Grace's structural organization around responsibility coupled throughout her work and volunteer life, but perhaps the greatest example of the coupling of responsibility to an opportunity that enacted social consciousness came about in her marriage. Her husband volunteered to run a campaign, but when he failed to take action, Grace's structure of responsibility forced her to get involved. She remembered this commitment when she said:

Bill signed up to run the election of George McGovern for Northern Tulare County, where we were living. He is not someone who does much. He was kind of a sit in the chair and theorize person that could never take thought to action. So I got involved and I ran the campaign for Northern Tulare County and we registered people to vote. At the same time we were trying to get George

McGovern to win the primary, there was also a proposition so the farmworkers could have collective bargaining rights. So we worked with the farmworkers and registered a lot of people to vote. We worked hand in hand with the local farmworker leader.

Grace's own position was that she "wasn't that political" and that she "just wanted to raise [her] daughter and go back to school." However, Grace stated, "He had made these commitments and so increasingly, I said 'Bill you either need to give this up or I'll do it.'"

This sentence is interesting because it indicates that Grace's structure of responsibility would not let the commitments fall apart despite the fact that she had not made the commitments, was not political, and only wanted to go to school and raise her daughter. Thus, it was responsibility, not political consciousness that drove Grace to structurally couple to the election and enact her social consciousness. As she related, "It was really by default that I became a political activist because I could get things done. I'm kind of a rubber meets the road person. I organize and get things done." Nonetheless, she enacted her need to be responsible to others with the campaign for Northern Tulare County and registered people to vote. This experience in turn provided myriad opportunities for Grace to enact her social consciousness in the political arena.

Grace reflected on her sense of responsibility and commitment to social changes when she says "things could be better and I can do a lot." She further indicated shifts in her structural coupling when she states, "I think I went back from the great political system with the McGovern campaign to just one-on-one. I felt that as a person you can make a difference." Structurally coupling one-on-one rather than to a large political system does not reflect a lack of viability in the coupling, but rather that it is not optimal

(Varela et al., 1991) for Grace as she sought authentic modes of social consciousness expression. This desire for one-on-one, authentic connections also represents an additional structural organization around social consciousness based on a desire for holistic relationships.

Holistic Relationships

Another structure that emerged from Grace's childhood was a desire for holistic relationships as defined as healthy intra-, inter- and extra-personal relationships. An awareness of these types of healthy relationships and a subsequent desire to have them in her life was formed in her early childhood, which she remembered as a "kind of a happy, normal family with a lot of laughter—a pretty good situation." Furthermore, Grace stated, "I'm really a happy person and I think that other people have an entitlement. I believe in justice and justice includes the right to be happy—to have so many onerous burdens lifted." Grace attributes this happiness to having "security and happiness early" in her childhood, much of which was influenced by loving grandmother figures. In describing these women Grace stated:

I had a grandmother in Provo, who was just an independent, wonderful woman. Both sides of her family were Mormon pioneers that came to the Valley in wagon trains in 1850. She was a really strong person, and all her daughters were strong, amazing women. The other person was my grandmother, who lived with us and in many ways she was the foundation of a lot of my security and happiness, and I think playfulness in life.

These early influences of love and support gave Grace a strong sense of belonging and her Grandmother, Sophie, influenced an early spiritual life because they went to church together. Although Grace's spiritual life continued to grow without formal religious

influence during her adult years, early expressions of love tied to spiritualism in her childhood influenced the formation of a structural desire for holistic relationships.

Thus, Grace's spiritual life became an enactment of this structure which influenced her social consciousness. As she stated:

I've always felt from the youngest age that if I don't know what to do that I can pray and it becomes clear. I have to walk around. Maybe it's a week later, but I've always relied on prayer and I believe that there is an innate goodness that you can see in the planet.

Grace felt her relationship to spirit and prayer were a great strength for her, but she also felt "there were always people who helped [her]—teachers, my counselors, my friends." Interestingly, despite the degrading and dangerous conditions present in her home life, Grace emerged from her childhood with a belief in goodness and support from divine forces, which was more than likely influenced by a structural organization towards holistic relationships.

Respect for people also informed Grace's structural couplings as she enacted her structures of holistic relationships. Despite the hatefulness she experienced at the hands of her parents and husband, Grace managed to structurally couple to healthy relationships that enabled her to grow and thrive as described in the following passage.

I finally had a really great support group from the campaign. It was really good for me. Maybe it was just thinking that I could do something well and maybe it was having a leadership role with the other volunteers, which were mostly students and young people.

Grace thrived in her leadership role with the volunteers, but she also gained from her interactions with the farmworkers and her growing awareness of community. As she described it:

I think the fullness was part of growing up in West Salt Lake with poor people in little houses. That was as happy or happier than other places we lived and certainly less alienating than the big houses we lived in at other times—when you're very much separated and not in a community of people at all. I even thank going door-to-door with the farmworkers. I mean they're roasting meat in the backyard and I would have a kid in the backpack and they would say, "Come, sit down—milk for the baby, a beer for you." There was this real happiness, and it's not with stuff—it's with people.

These interactions with the farmworkers affected Grace's understanding of happiness and sense of community that influenced a structural organization around holistic relationships that enabled Grace to leave an unhappy marriage because her husband was "emotionally barren."

Later, after she divorced, Grace moved to Fresno and became a part of the counterculture, further reinforcing her structural organization around holistic relationships. Grace described this time in her life.

We called ourselves freaks—we were counterculture. I guess you would call me a hippie. It was a great place to have no money. I could have a Volkswagen and live in the ghetto and have a child on my own. The rest of the culture was pretty straightforward. Much like it was in the 50s, but in the counterculture, I fit in fine and I had really lovely friends who were artists and musicians. I had a nice niche where I felt I belonged to. I was involved in getting an alternative birthing center off the ground. I was involved with Planned Parenthood. I was involved in the food coop. We had a cooperative day care. I think my whole life was building social change in an alternative community towards a better vision. There was lots of room to do interesting things and make a difference.

There are several interesting aspects to this passage. First of all, Grace's structure of needing holistic relationships becomes viably coupled with the Freemont counterculture and this environment enables the enactment of her social consciousness through nonprofit community opportunities. However, this passage shows Grace not only connecting to others, but also structurally coupling to herself (Thom, 2000) to define an authentic

vision for herself, and to live her life “from the inside out.”

An additional aspect of Grace’s structure of holistic relationship is her connection to the planet. While she was a part of the counterculture, she became increasingly ecologically minded. This ecological mindedness was enacted through several structural couplings including a relationship, college courses, and a research job at the zoo. Grace describes these couplings in the following passage.

I started living with Rob, who was the zoo educator and he was a really gentle man with the environment. Right about the time I met Rob, I also took some ecology classes and some planning classes to finish my degree because I needed more [credits]. I think an ecological awareness really grew—[an awareness of] the fragility of the earth. I got a job at the zoo [as] a researcher [studying] a genetic bank of species that were being destroyed in the world...It was just a wonderful love that he evolved.

This triad of influence represents an example of coemergence in which Grace’s structural organization of holistic relationships coupled to people, places, and opportunities that enabled her, others, environments and contexts to coemerge in unique and relational ways.

An example of this relational coemergence, the way in which multiple components influence and interact with each other to create unique understandings and expressions, can be seen when she said:

I’ve always relied on prayer and I believe that there is an innate goodness that you can see in the planet. I think that environmentalism and spiritualism—they are one. It’s one planet with an exhibition of the great wholeness and wonderment. I believe that God is just and as creatures of God, we should be just. We should be fair, we should be loving—the God I know is very loving. So it’s my job to be loving. The only limitation of God in this world is no hands. He has to rely on our hands.

This passage indicates a complex coemergence (Davis & Sumara, 1997; Sumara &

Davis, 1997) in which Grace's spirituality, ecological awareness, and social consciousness interact and influence mutual, dynamic understandings. Grace is not religious, but her social consciousness is clearly articulated in the spiritual aspects of her holistic relationship identity structures. For Grace, this structure and in particular the spiritual aspects of this structure have remained remarkably stable throughout her lifetime although the complexity by which they are understood and expressed have certainly evolved throughout her life.

Grace's unique social consciousness was shaped in her childhood by structures of decision making, responsibility and holistic relationships. Because of violent, overbearing and emotionally bereft parents, Grace structures of decision-making initially coupled with survival mechanisms simply to get her out of her house. Fortunately many of these opportunities exposed Grace to volunteerism and social justice causes that shaped an early awareness of inequity and enacted her social consciousness. In time and as a result of being exposed to social justice causes, Grace began to shift her structure of decision making from survival to pro-action and participation. Grace's structures of responsibility and holistic relationships were also shaped in childhood but were enacted in adulthood through couplings with the California counterculture movement, the farmworker's movement and the grassroots political activism. These couplings provided opportunities and environments for coemergence in which Grace grew, became self-aware and expressed her social consciousness in increasingly authentic forms and subsequently, the environments to which she was coupled were shaped and formed by this growth.

Reflection

I will close this chapter with a review of my research questions and a reflection on their significance in light of the previous narratives. In review, my research questions were as follows.

1. What are the significant life events and circumstances that influenced the enactment of social consciousness in each female nonprofit leader?
2. How was learning related to social consciousness enacted from these events or life circumstances for each female nonprofit leader?
3. How did this learning influence the nonprofit leader's social action?

Significant Life Events and Circumstances

In the previous narratives, it became clear that major life events in childhood created structural organization (Maturana & Varela, 1987; Varela et al., 1991) that shaped and influenced the way in which each woman enacted their social consciousness. For Freya these structures were hard work, frugality and altruistic suffering. For Joy the structures were social mobility, a resulting privileged guilt and personal connections. Julia's structures were based on mental illness, abandonment and a desire for authentic self-expression. In Grace's childhood, her structures became organized around decision making, responsibility to others, and holistic relationship.

What is interesting about all of these organizing structures is the degree to which they emerged in early childhood, had little or nothing to do with social justice per se, remained constant throughout life, but shaped the participant's interaction to social

justice causes. In other words, in these cases it doesn't seem to matter what an individual's internal organizing structure is, as long as it provides a viable opportunity to structurally couple to social justice impulses. Thus, structures unrelated to social consciousness, such as frugality, a need for attention, responsibility, or a desire for socialization can all provide viable structures that might couple with social justice endeavors, but not represent typical perceptions of the motivation to engage in social justice causes. Thus, structures act as enabling factors through which motivations can be enacted, but it is unclear how structures are related to motivations themselves. This is an interesting point to note because **each** woman felt compelled to "make a difference." Given that my population was nonprofit leaders, it is not surprising that each woman made this claim, but better understanding the structural organization behind this compulsion would be interesting although not something I undertook in this study.

Another point that was interesting across lives, although not persistent enough in the data to be claimed as a central structural organization, was family or subconscious influences that were remembered but subverted during adolescence and early adulthood. For example, both Grace and Freya referenced dramatic pictures they saw in childhood that impacted them.

Freya: From my earliest memory as a child, I wanted to go to Africa and plant corn. I think maybe I saw Save the Children or something on TV—kids starving, Ethiopia...drought, whatever. I don't know and that's just always stayed with me.

Grace: I think that image in Life magazine—the news story when they were spitting on little [black] girls—that just really got in my mind.

Joy recognized a social consciousness that was introduced in her family of origin, but that had remained "dormant for many, many years." Finally, Julia acknowledged the

influence of her mother who was “very socially conscious” and “carried the guilt of the southern whites.” From these statements and from the structures created in childhood, we can see that the forces that influence social consciousness are both deliberate and random, and that my participants were shaped by media images and by their parent’s politics. However, they seemed to be most powerfully and permanently shaped by the lived experiences and personal identities that required them to structurally couple to environments that enabled them to enact their social consciousness in uniquely personal ways.

Learning and the Enactment of Social Consciousness

When I interviewed Grace about her social consciousness, she responded, “To you my social consciousness is a real thing. To me, it’s like really...it’s just who I was.” I loved her response, and although the other women never pushed me about my terminology, they all glossed over the term to one degree or another. Julia actually said she never used the term social consciousness, but all the women had an intuitive understanding of what was meant by the term and how they learned to enact their social consciousness.

As indicated in the previous section, all the women felt they **should** make a difference, but this compulsion went beyond mere wishful thinking to action. For each woman, the learning that enabled this action was specific to the structural organization of her social consciousness and the opportunities presented by available viable environments. When an environment “triggered” (Proulx, 2004, 2008) an opportunity for

one of the participants to express their social consciousness, then both the woman and the environment coemerged in a dynamic whole (Davis & Sumara, 1997; Sumara & Davis, 1997). Examples of this were seen when Grace served beans and rice in front of Earl Butz's \$100-a-plate dinner, when Freya took \$2,000 to Kenya to start a micro credit enterprise, when Julia managed a caseload of chronically mentally ill patients, and when Joy oversaw a three day building blitz for Habitat for Humanity. As we can see, the enactment of social consciousness is not only specific to the causes with which a woman identifies, but also the specific skills and knowledge she brings to the environment as well as the opportunities the environment provides. Put differently and in enactivist terms, the bounds of an autopoietic system are specified by its operations (Baerveldt & Verheggen, 1999).

Influence of Learning on Social Action

The final research question, "How did this learning influence the nonprofit leader's social action?" gives me the greatest pause in reflection. If I were just looking at the journey within each of my participant's lives, I would see a progression of lessons, self-awareness and increasingly sophisticated social action. This learning has already been documented within each woman's individual narrative. It is clear that the learning of the women across the span of their lives generated a commitment to and involvement in social action. However, there is a narrative that spans across all four of my participants experiences and I would be remiss in not bringing it to light.

All women expressed strong feelings of burn out, hopelessness, and frustration at the lack of funding, political climate, and apathy of volunteers and fellow board

members. They also expressed exhaustion at the number of hours they had committed to causes, particularly when they saw how little this investment often returned. Although all the women felt they got more than they gave, it is disturbing to see the toll social action takes on nonprofit leaders. My interview notes contained statements such as “Banging my head against the wall,” “I had to throw a fit to get the board to do a task each month,” “I can’t do it by myself,” “I was feeling tired.... it’s a hopeless feeling to see so many people in need,” “It’s frustrating to me because we have struggled financially to be able to fulfill [this vision],” “There’s got to be other ways to make an impact without personal damage,” and “It’s not appropriate serving on a nonprofit board where I’m the only person that gives a rip.” In reviewing such statements, there is a different type of learning related to social action presented. This learning represents difficulty of working in nonprofit settings and personal damage and sacrifice that can result. All four participants have had to scale back or eliminate their nonprofit work due to financial pressures or concerns over work/life balance. Despite dedication and years of commitments, lack of progress on social issues coupled with personal and family concerns have forced these women to rethink priorities and to plan more effective, efficient and authentic ways to enable their social consciousness. In this way, the learning of the participants influenced both engagement with social action and the reduction of involvement.

In reviewing the transcripts and reading my participant’s laments about burnout and feeling like they are carrying a heavy burden on their own, I recognized a shift in my own thinking about social action. Just as Joy felt privileged guilt, I too experienced guilt at not doing more, particularly when reflecting on how generously each of these busy

social activists had given me their time for this study. This was not the first time I learned from my participants, in fact, I felt my entire study was an interaction of my own naïve conceptions of social consciousness with ideas and experiences of four women who actually knew what they were doing. This interaction represents what Sumara and Davis (1997) recognized as an enactivist research paradigm in which researcher and researched are dialectically engaged in a mutually specifying relationship, where each specifies the other through in an ongoing coupling of understandings. Therefore, as I have come to understand my participant's enacted journeys through social consciousness, my own social consciousness has become irrevocably enacted. I am changed.

CHAPTER V

IMPLICATIONS

Overview

I began this dissertation asserting a problem that we do not know enough about social consciousness to know how it is learned, if it can be taught, if it is stable over a lifetime, and what factors and life events shape its unique expression. I further questioned how people came to enact caring about social justice causes and why they enacted caring about certain causes but not others? I believe Chapters I through IV addressed issues of social consciousness stability, the factors and life events that shape the unique expression of social consciousness, and how people come to enact caring about social justice causes. However, thus far I have not considered how social consciousness is learned and if it can be taught. These questions have implications for educational practice and will be addressed in the first part of this chapter.

As a limitation of this study, I did not study the social constructions of learning in the formations of social consciousness, the way learning in social movements specifically shaped learning, or the way institutions or social, cultural and political structures shaped understandings separate from the learning expressed from my participants. In other words, I did not consider the socio/cultural influences that shaped the structures that emerged in my participant's childhoods. Considering these social/cultural influences has implications for developing and forwarding enactivist theory and the second section of this chapter posits the work of Davis and Sumara (2006) as a way to bridge enactivist

theory to social/cultural considerations.

Finally, I end this chapter with a reflection on this research and how I believe it might be improved through future research endeavors. I also offer insights into arts-based research and how these methods might provide new understandings of nonprofit motivation and altruism.

Implications for Practice

How is social consciousness learned? At the end of the previous chapter, I attempted answering this question, but it is a complex question and its answering will extend far beyond this dissertation. It appears the foundations of social consciousness for nonprofit leaders are laid in childhood through the everyday interactions of media, family politics, relationships, trauma and opportunity. In other words, every day lived experience. Of course, I only considered the lives of four female nonprofit leaders, and the net must be cast much farther afield to understand if there is a structural organization formed in childhood that is common to others who exhibit a strong social consciousness in adulthood.

Through the couplings of a structure that is unique to each individual, social consciousness is learned through embodied experiences and coemerged explorations of interests, needs, talents, fears, curiosities, beliefs, and other personal expressions that advance an individual's ability to explore their own identity within a complex environment of self, other, and opportunity. Furthermore, for these women, structural dynamics related to social consciousness emerged in childhood and remained relatively

stable over time; however, social consciousness can become enacted in increasingly complex ways as the underlying structural dynamics that shape its enactment coemerge with opportunity and environments. In this way learning related to social consciousness is “occasioned” (Davis et al., 1996) rather than caused.

If learning is occasioned rather than caused, how should we envision educational environments designed to promote social justice considerations? The first step requires accommodating an understanding of complicated realities as different from complex systems, where complex systems have three characteristics (Sumara & Davis, 1997). First of all, complex systems are adaptive and have the capacity to evolve within changing environments. Second, they have the capacity to self-organize and in the process of self-organization, become more than themselves. In other words, a complex system is more than the sum of its parts. Thirdly, complex systems cannot be understood by analyzing its component parts the way in which a complicated system can be understood. A computer is complicated and can be understood by analyzing its individual pieces and parts and their relationships to each other. A plant is complex and can only be understood by considering its relationship to its environment.

Once educational environments are conceptualized as complex rather than merely complicated (Davis & Sumara, 1997; Davis et al., 2000; Sumara & Davis, 1997), an understanding of how or if challenging concepts, such as social justice, can be taught begins to emerge. Davis and Sumara questioned the belief that learning can be predetermined and caused by linear and direct terms such as teaching and instead offer “an interpretation of human activity as relational, codetermined, and existing in a

complex web of events” (p. 112). For them, learning should not be based on a linear dynamic of cause and effect, objective and outcome, but rather should be understood to occur in non-linear relationships between collectives and individuals, truths and emergent possibilities. As they state, “Trying to establish a causal relationship between one event and another, or between a teaching action and a learning outcome confuses essential participation with monologic authority” (Sumara & Davis, 1997, p. 412). Similarly, enactivists conceptualize learning in three states:

First that knowledge unfolds in systems, whereby cognition coemerges with environment, individuals and activity. Second, that understanding is embedded in the conduct and relationships among systems and subsystems, rather than the minds of individual actors. Third, that learning is continuous invention and explorations linked to disequilibrium in systems and amplified with feedback loops. (Fenwick, 2001, p. 251)

These states recognize learners as more than *situated* within particular contexts and render problematic educational theories and practices that are inattentive to the evolving relationships between learner and environment. In complex systems, the learner and environment are intertwined in a mutually specifying relationship where one affects the other. As the learner learns, the context changes, simply because one of its components has changed and as the context changes, so does the learner. Thus, learning and teaching cannot be understood monologically, “there is no direct causal, linear, fixable relationship among various components of any community of practice” (Sumara & Davis, 1997, p. 414).

If complexity theory and enactivist frameworks render causal teaching relationships problematic, what are educators who are committed to fairness and social justice supposed to do? Fenwick (2000) critiqued “impositional educators who presume

to determine what comprises false consciousness and then undertake to replace it.” She claims this primarily occurs due to a lack of self-reflexivity as shown in an unwillingness to explore “their own intrusions and repressions and [acknowledge] their own inscription by dominant discourses and their own will to power” (p. 260). Buttressed by this postmodern critique and armed with her own strong commitments to social justice causes, Tara Fenwick proposed a model for teaching social justice that is informed by her research in complexity thinking and enactivist frameworks. This model rejected a “hero-rescuer motif...[and] grand utopias of social responsibility for adult education” (2003, p. 134) in favor of teaching environments based on three conditions identified for complex, coadaptive systems to flourish. These conditions are: the induction of coemergence, listening and playing the role of disturber. Fenwick indicated an effective role for educators is to induce coemergence by exercising influence on conditions that are possible to influence such as occasioning interactions, decentralizing control and liberating constraints. As Fenwick explains, inducing coemergence “involves open-ended design but not control: making spaces, removing barriers, introducing and amplifying disturbances” (2003, p. 136).

Listening is the mechanism by which educators come to understand coemergence and create the ‘space’ for experience to emerge without the need to reshape, redefine or emancipate it. As Fenwick noted, “Too often, educators might be suspected of approaching others with an anthropologist’s gaze—with external ‘expert’ knowledge attempting to penetrate and represent the internal knowledge of a community to which they do not belong” (2003, p. 136). Instead, educators are encouraged to bear witness to

enfolded stories, dynamics and relationships and help interpret diverse individuals' experiences to one another, enabling each participant's stories and understandings to mutually specify awareness, action and shifts in identity.

Finally, Fenwick suggested that systems must be subject to disturbances if they are to evolve and educators committed to promoting systems that are more just and equitable are well positioned to construct "deviances that generate a system's disequilibrium" (2003, p. 137). In making such a statement, Fenwick cautions against both anarchy and educational abdication, but rather encourages a view of social justice education that can "help reclaim and re-embody the signifier of experiential learning, to restore its poetry and its complex entanglement in expanding spaces that resist fragmentation and control" (2003, p. 137).

Fenwick proposes an interesting model for promoting social justice education in the classroom that is worth considering. In reflection, I do not believe social consciousness is something we, as educators, can teach but it is probably something we can influence through exposure to social issues and questions of justice. Nonetheless, Fenwick's model proposes an enactivist view of social justice education in which social consciousness is not caused, but has the possibility of being triggered through environmental structures.

As I am not an expert on social justice education and my research did not investigate this phenomenon, I will leave it to other scholars to determine these aspects of influence on social consciousness. Regardless, this research indicates social consciousness emerges from a complex web of lived history, orientation towards

empathy, and personal, social and cultural identities. Although I am hesitant to believe we can teach social consciousness, I do believe environmental mechanisms can help enact social consciousness. These mechanisms include modeling fair and just behaviors in classrooms and creating space for coemergent explorations of what it means to be socially just. Beyond these simple enactivist practices which are described in detail by other scholars (Davis & Sumara, 1997; Fenwick, 2003; Niessen et al., 2008; Sumara & Davis, 1997), this research suggests that we might expect each human being to enact their social consciousness in the way they are structurally able to at any given time.

Implications for Theory

Theorists in the field of adult education are moving toward learning theories that integrate both the individual and contextual aspects of learning. Most recently, Merriam (2008) pointed to the value of theoretical approaches which understand learning as a multidimensional process and pay greater attention to the learning context. The work of Davis and Sumara (2006) also called for a consideration of learning from multiple but simultaneous perspectives, which raises what could be considered a limitation in this research.

As mentioned previously, enactivism considers learning from the perspective of individual learning structures and how they couple with the environment, but my research did not investigate the social, cultural or political environments of learning or how these environments shaped the structures that emerged in my participants' childhoods. The decision to exclude these environments was based on the practical need to focus the

research, but there is an obvious disconnect between studying social consciousness (a construct that is enacted in social, cultural and political settings) and its emergence within the psychological structures of a human being. Although enactivism is a learning theory that takes into account multiple levels of influence from the neurological, psychological, social, cultural, and political through an analysis of the lived history of the learner (Davis & Sumara, 2006; Maturana & Varela, 1987; Varela et al., 1991), my own research did not consider these multiple contexts, nor did it forward a theoretical framework for considering enactivist learning theory across multiple contexts.

Davis and Sumara (2006) proposed a theoretical framework based on complexity thinking that enables enactivism theory, rooted at the psychological or biological levels, to consider influence from the social, cultural, political and ecological levels. Davis and Sumara promote a view of complexity thinking that reinforces enactivist assertions that beings coemerge within their environments, and each simultaneously cocreates the other. This research was bounded within these theoretical assertions. However, they take their assertions a step further by stating that this interaction occurs simultaneously at multiple nested levels from bodily subsystems, to the body, to collectivities, to societies, the species, and the biosphere (Davis & Sumara, 2006; see Figure 15).

By considering learning across nested levels, what Davis and Sumara called “level jumping,” one considers learning as a process of interactions between beings and their environments, eliminating the dichotomy of individual and context. Davis and Sumara identify several advantages of using this as a research tool, including the ability to study different levels of learning simultaneously and to draw on research from many

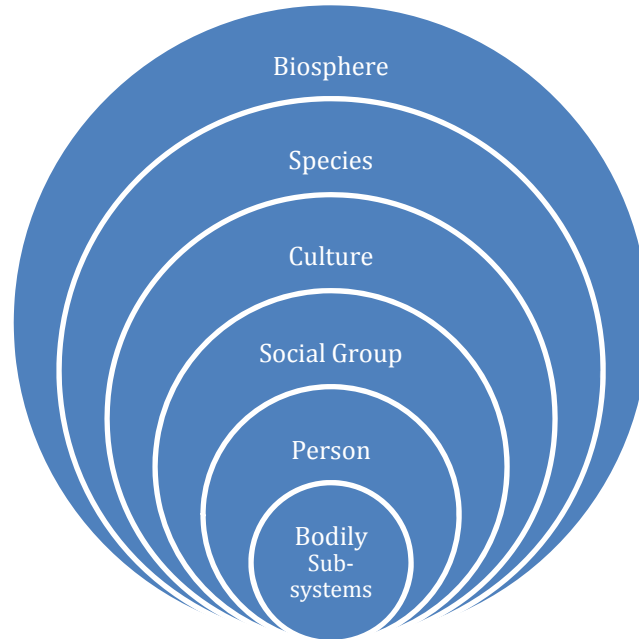


Figure 15. Nested levels of learning, adapted from Davis and Sumara (2006, p. 110).

disciplines, including neuroscience, psychology and sociology.

Level jumping proposes that a learner is “simultaneously a coherent unity, a complex of interacting unities, or a part of a grander unity” (Davis et al., 2008, p. 14). Thus, by using level jumping as a conceptual framework, we are able to explore learning at six levels from the cellular to the species, using multiple theoretical frameworks (Davis & Sumara, 2006). As a practical application this can be done by using a single learning experience to demonstrate understanding across multiple and simultaneous learning processes. The data collection methods used would consider learning at all levels and therefore consider the theories most applicable at each level. For example, research involving the bodily subsystem’s level of learning might consider recent research in neurology which considers the brain’s analogic way of understanding and the “radical contextuality” of a brain rooted in both species and individual learning (Davis et al.,

2008, p. 110). At the person level, Davis and Sumara (2006) suggested the use of psychological learning theories which consider learning as a cognitive process. For example, constructivism explains how individuals make meaning and connect learning to prior life experiences and existing knowledge (Ernest, 2010). The third level, social groups, categorizes a variety of interactions between the individual learner and social networks. It is difficult to separate this level from the fourth level of culture, because the structures of a culture necessarily enable and constrain the interactions of its people. That said, it is possible to make use of a range of anthropological and sociocultural theories to understand learning at this level. Davis and Sumara's fifth and sixth levels, the species and the biosphere, present a worldview that extends beyond the cultural to the ecological and remind us of inherent interrelationships of balance and cause and effect. By considering ecological theories of learning, we may gain insight into ways this interconnectedness affects learning.

Although considering several levels of learning simultaneously can be very helpful, it is also difficult to separate out the influence different levels have on learning. For example, the role of society in shaping language impacts how individuals make meaning using those language structures (Baerveldt & Verheggen, 1999; Maturana & Varela, 1987). However, this very complexity shows why the use of nested levels is so important for understanding how our learning processes are happening in a variety of ways simultaneously. Since my research only considered an enactivist view of the psychological structures of my participants coemerging within their environments, I propose level-jumping as a possible future theoretical bridge to between my and other

enactivists' research and a more comprehensive consideration of learning contexts.

Suggestions for Future Research

In the initial section of this chapter I discussed the challenges and opportunities inherent in teaching social consciousness. However, it has been my contention throughout this research and I suggested in the delimitations section of this study that empathy is a precursor to social consciousness although the bounds of my research did not allow me to study this dynamic. All of my participants displayed high levels of empathy, providing beginning evidence that the basis of social consciousness is empathetic awareness.

I believe this would be a fruitful area for future research, particularly if the research used the emerging phenomenological theories on empathy and enculturation being developed by enactivist Evan Thompson (2001b, 2005, 2007). I found Thompson's theories in the 11th-hour of my research project and realized my research would have been equally or more complex and interesting had I studied the roots of activist behavior (empathy) rather than its branches (social consciousness). Nonetheless, the two qualities are inextricably linked, and further studies which consider the relationship, particularly within enactivist frameworks, would advance our understandings of social action and enactivist theory.

An additional suggestion for future research stem specifically from challenges I encountered during data analysis in this study. The first has to do with competing identity structure such as Joy's dual class structures that created privileged guilt as a third

organizing structure stemming from the two structures of a lower social class and upward mobility and Julia's dual self-expression structures that pitted examples of conservative Virginia culture against her mother's bohemian rejection of that culture to create an organizing structure around authenticity. Further research that uses enactivist frameworks to explore viability of structural coupling around identity concepts, dueling identity constructs and borderland identities would be helpful because the plasticity, recursivity, multiplicity and agility of identity constructs appears to be currently under-theorized in enactivist literature.

Furthermore, enactivism provided little help in making sense of participant's claims of intuition and inner drives for "making a difference." While "making a difference" could represent aspects of connection that might be uncovered in research on empathy, the *inner drive* to make a difference has not been explored in enactivist literature. Fenwick (2001) recognized the same dynamic in her study, noting that an individual's subjective world of cognition, that is not present in action or dialogue, needed further consideration in enactivist research. Because the use of life history collage in this study glimpsed the subjective world of my participant in the way they represented meaningful images related to the development of their social consciousness, perhaps combining arts-based methods with explorations of motivation and empathy would reveal a greater understanding of these constructs.

In the previous section, I proposed Davis and Sumara's (2006) concept of level jumping. Thus, it is a natural conclusion that this or other psychologically oriented enactivist research could be extended by considering learning events across multiple

learning levels. This approach to studying my participant's learning histories would provide novel insight to both enactivism and applied research for complexity theory. Finally, in this chapter I also suggested implications for the practice of social justice education based on the work of Fenwick (2000, 2001, 2003) which provides a rich basis for praxis research. Specifically, research might consider the efficacy and possibilities of Fenwick's suggestions for creating conditions that occasion social justice awareness: the induction of coemergence, listening, and playing the role of disturber (2003, p. 134).

In closing and in reflection, I think back over the years to where I started and wonder what suggestions for future research I would give myself. The next steps for me are to continue to explore and discuss Life History Collage as an arts-based research method and to share my thinking with the arts-based research community. I will continue to research female nonprofit leaders because they inspire me, but I may shift my focus from social consciousness to another aspect such as empathy. For me, enactivism is the most fascinating *learning* theory around, but there are many other theoretical frameworks worth considering, so I will continue reading theory to see how it shifts my perceptions and my thinking about my findings. All in all, it has been a road well-traveled, with great adventures, fine advisors, many challenges, and a few successes. Thank you for joining me on this journey!

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APPENDIX

LETTER OF SOLICITATION FOR PARTICIPANTS

Dear _____,

My name is Susan Seymour, and I am a doctoral student in the College of Education at Utah State University. Currently, I am conducting a research study using life history collage (an arts-informed research method) and life history interview to explore the evolution of social consciousness in female non-profit leaders. You have been identified as a possible research subject that might be willing to participate in this research project. I believe this research is important because it seeks to understand how social consciousness has evolved throughout the lives of female non-profit leaders.

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to produce a life history collage of pictures and/or words that you will share with me. You will also be asked to engage in approximately five interviews, and the interviews will be scheduled at a convenient time and location of your choosing. These interviews will last no more than two hours each. During this time, you will be asked to discuss the elements represented in your life history collage, learning experiences that led to the development of your social consciousness, the meanings represented in the images you created and other life history information pertinent to the evolution of your social consciousness. Follow-up interviews or clarifying questions may be conducted by phone or email.

Participation in this research study may involve some risks or discomforts which include a feeling of vulnerability, a sense of exposure, or pressure to comply with the research protocol. However, to minimize these risks, I will be sensitive to you and how much you want to share. I will be sensitive to any discomfort you may feel and am willing to share my own life history in order to equalize a sense of exposure or vulnerability. The benefits of participating in this research are that you will assist me in gaining greater knowledge and understanding regarding events and circumstances that influenced the development of social consciousness in non-profit leaders. I hope this learning will add to our understanding of creating leaders and citizen who work for a more just and equitable world. Furthermore, you may benefit from making art and reviewing the life circumstances that led to your career in non-profits. This self-investigation is inherent in life history research may enable you to reflect positively on your life and choices. All data collected during this research project will comply with the strictest level of confidentiality and protection of research subjects.

I hope you will seriously consider participating in this research project. Please let me know if you have questions or concerns regarding this opportunity.

Best,

Susan Seymour

Freya's Story

I was born near Cape Canaveral, Florida, my father is an engineer. The only thing I really got from my childhood was hard work. That's how come I'm always putting my shoulder to the wheel to press along because life isn't easy. It wasn't meant to be fun. It's just work and then you die. And that's how I was raised by my father. My mother was your typical woman of that era and weak—even though both my parents have master's degrees. But my mother never talked back to my father. He sits down and she brings his dinner and [after] picks it up. I grew up on a farm. I worked all summer and my friends played.

My father worked at Thiokol as the director of test and quality control. Thiokol is in Central City and they do the Minuteman missiles and the boosters and all that stuff....space and jet engines. He was the director out there over two areas and I remember when I was in high school I would meet people who their father worked for my father and they didn't like him. I think our work ethic comes from my dad and I think that when my dad worked with Thiokol, if you didn't produce *or* when my dad didn't like you, you knew [it] and your life was hell.

I have an older brother and a younger brother and we all had to work hard. If we were sitting around doing nothing, my father would find us something to do. When I was five, I had to pick the rocks out of the dirt where we were going to plant grass. I hated that none of my other friends had to pick rocks but I did. I had to pick a bucket of rocks before I could play.

When I was seven we bought this ranch in upper northern British Columbia and we'd go up there to work. It was an operating ranch 1500 miles away, where the snow gets up to the fence posts. After the last day of school, my mother had to drive us all up there *and* the day school started, we came back. We were the extra hired summer help, *but* we always had two families working there. *When we first started going to the ranch*, my mother had to go out and drive the truck and tractor, so I stayed in the log house. I got to take care of my little brother, but I made breakfast, lunch and dinner. My younger brother is seven years younger so I took care of him *until* I was 12 and could drive...shifting and all this stuff—driving tractors and baling hay. Then my mother got to take care of Mont and I got to do all that stuff, so we just always had to work. It was expected and you didn't say.... he didn't abuse us, but we were spanked. You knew you'd get a spanking.

Even as a child, I don't want to say that I hated my dad, but I was afraid of my dad. I didn't like my dad, he was scary. I always wished he could go on business trips. He was mean to my mom. He did hit her once, because she didn't want to go up there—drive up 1500 miles in northern British Columbia with three kids in the backseat *to* boss ranch guys around. *My dad didn't go to the ranch with us because he* worked at Thiokol. He could fly, so he bought a small airplane so he could come up during the Fourth of July.

We were dirt poor. I had a friend and her dad was a director at Thiokol. They had a Cadillac and a nice house and we lived like church mice. We didn't live like a director because all of the money went to the ranch. The table we ate on was never cleared because that was the office. I remember being embarrassed because my friends would come over and their houses were so neat and clean and ours had stacks of books and logs because we had cows and we had to keep track of the babies they were having. *Not only that*, my father would *transport* a silage truck engine *from Canada* and take out the engine in our living room and he would overhaul *it* so our living room would always have a car engine in it all winter. So the reason we always had an old '57 Chevy, that I was always embarrassed to be seen in because my friends always had new cars, is because my father was able to get a big silage truck engine into the Chevy car [as a] way to get it home and take it apart. Then he would put it back together and in May, we would drive it back up to Canada so that we'd have a refurbished engine for the ranch trucks. The next year we'd bring the other one down.

So in the fall when Freya, Craig and Mont had to come back to school [mimicking father] "Damn I wish they could stay up there forever and work on the ranch and be my slaves"—that's what we often thought, we bought this plane and planes have paint on them. If you think about what a gallon of paint weighs, it slows the plane down. So we had to go out on Saturdays and Sundays to Central City airport and strip the paint off the plane. I'm driving out to the Central City airport and I'm about nine years old, in this '57 Chevy but I hate it. We're out for another day to strip paint off of the airplane because it takes a lot to strip paint off an airplane, and so I'm sitting there slumped over and my dad says, "What are you sulking about?" and I say "I don't want to go out there" and my dad says "that's too bad" and I said, "I wish I was dead" and he said "so do I and you're not so..." and so that's kind of my attitude on life. I look at life...I mean I have a friend and she loves life and she'll tell me how she loves life and I think "I wish it was over with. Get me out of here." I believe that life is horrible and I want to be dead as soon as I can be. I'm tired of living and I say that honestly. I've been tired of living since I was a little girl. I mean I have fun. I mean I've probably traveled more than a lot of people, and I've lived my life. I'm not suicidal, but it's just that I'm so tired of this—see I think it's because I'm a fighter, because I always have to be working.

My father always had me write a contract every year I went to the ranch—that he would pay me so much for doing what I would do and I would sign it and he would sign it. I would make a dollar a day taking care of Mont—fixing breakfast, lunch and dinner. I got a penny for every pole I would strip with a machete. My father always taught me to get it in writing, so I think if I hadn't have got it in writing, my father wouldn't have paid me. I picked out a sheep, we didn't take cows because cows were worth too much, but I had a sheep and she would have lambs and her wool would pay for her food. I don't know...I would get a little money every year from the lamb she would have. I had to make that money last for the year. I didn't have to buy my own food but I did have to buy my own clothes. And so when I would run out of money then I would vacuum and sweep in Central City. I started working at a ranch house when I was 15.

In high school, I was number 11 of 425 kids. I was in the top 3% and I just say that because I never skipped a day at school and I didn't do drugs and I didn't do cigarettes or anything like that. I remember consciously thinking I didn't want to hurt my mother- my mother had enough pain. She didn't need to have pain because of me. I hung out with the parking lot kids and I can remember a friend of mine who said "oh yeah you did lots of drugs in high school." I said, "I didn't do any drugs." I didn't do anything, but because I hung out with the parking lot gang, *people thought I did*. I dressed wild and I had all these pin curls. I got a pair of boots from the DI, one was purple and one was pink. But I was in the top 3% of my class and I got a scholarship because I was in the top and you know, my mother never said "what are you doing, you can't go to school [dressed] like that." My mother supported that and it was, like as long as my mother would support me being different then I would support her and not do anything that would hurt her up. I guess I thought that because I suffered, I thought my mother must surely suffer for being his wife, and so that's why I was a good kid.

My mother is from back east, an only child. *She* was a teacher when she met my father. Later, she got her masters in library science and my father did have her work. *I think she went back to work* for the money—the ranch just took it all. When I was in seventh grade...so see, this is another thing—my mom's going to school and then my mom was teaching. So who gets Mont ready every day to go to school? I remember running around saying [mimicking yelling] 'Mont, hurry up, quit watching TV', 'Hurry up! You got to go to school, we're going to be late!' Then I send him out the door and I go to school. I remember I always did feel bad about it because I love my little brother. I shouldn't have been put in that position. It should've been my mother doing that, not me. That started when I was in seventh grade.

My mother was never the real mother. She was busy with the ranch. She didn't have time to make cupcakes. I always wanted my mother to be the room mother and she never was. So no, I can't tell you I have a role model about caring about others but very much a role model of getting work done. *My mother later told* that she has always been a lazy person, I guess she was always working because my father made her. I can't really tell you who my mother is because growing up my mother was bossed around by my dad and now she's too old to know who she is.

He's mentally abusive, very mentally abusive—he just can't be nice. I remember when I was about 25. My mother said, "Freya don't cry for me anymore. I made the decision years ago that I wasn't going to leave Dewey and so that's the way it is." Even when I was 10, I'd say, "Mom leave dad, you can support us, you can be a schoolteacher...we can be okay." It was more than he just wasn't nice to her, he wasn't nice to my older brother. He wasn't nice to any of us. He was probably a little nicer to me just because I was a girl and I did what he told me to do. He just wasn't a nice person. He is just verbally abusive to my mother and he always has been. My hope is that he'll die and give my mother some peace—a few years peace.

When I graduated from high school, my father told them all to go to hell at work,

came home and told my mother he'd quit. Craig and I were out of the house and my little brother at the time was about twelve. *He* packed her up and Mont and went up to the ranch and put it up for sale—my mother said she never thought they would sell it and they did.

I met Chris when I was a junior *and we* dated my junior and senior year. *When* my father quit his job at Thiokol they moved, so that was kind of the thing. I don't think I would've gotten married. I would've lived with my parents, continued to date Chris and gone to Weber College. But they were moving to Idaho Falls and I thought "well if I get an apartment and Chris gets an apartment, we might as well get married and live together." See that's my frugality and what was interesting is that I didn't think about living together. Why didn't I just think about Chris and I living together? Why did I only think about us getting married, because, see, I was a hippie and hippies live together, they don't get married? So if my father was still at Thiokol, I think things would have been different. We would've continued to go out but I would've lived at home and just driven to Ogden and gone to school. I think it would've been different, but my parents moved so I was going to have to get a place by myself. So why not get a place with Chris and why not get married? So that was kind how that happened. You know I loved him and all that good stuff.

I've never had an abusive [boyfriend], all of the men I've gone out with have been good to me—have been good people. I got married right out of high school, and went to college. When I was 19, I got my associates degree *which* was an emphasis in commercial art. I had Giles and I worked at my in-laws children's clothing store and then when Giles was two, I went back to college and continued to work at the children's clothing store until I graduated. I got my bachelor's degree in computer information systems. We got divorced when Giles was almost 7. I've always thought that *going back to school* probably [affected our marriage]. Chris went to school and he was almost a junior, but he just didn't like school. He's a carpenter and he just didn't like *it*. I think when I graduated and made a dollar an hour more than he did at the top of his field as a carpenter—I always thought that that kind of bothered him. But when people would ask him, he would say, "No, I think it's great my old lady makes more than me." But then he was working in Debbie's basement and she became his girlfriend and we got divorced and he married her. Chris and I were married for 12 years.

It was really hard when I got divorced. It's just like the chair was kicked out from underneath me because I had always been top of my class, went to college and I was smart. Chris's parents loved me and Chris loved me, and then he didn't and he got a girlfriend and so that was really hard. I spent time on myself, raced my bike locally—I was building my ego back up. I can remember one time at work, I walked down the end of this hall and there was a mirror at the end of the hall and I looked at myself and saw this pained expression. I thought, 'I'll never smile again.'

After two years I got my shit together enough *to find* a house and Giles and I moved into the avenues. Because I was scared, I was doing all these things to show that I

could. So doing that move, finding the place, and doing all that stuff was building me back up...so I didn't have time [to volunteer], *also* Giles was still in third grade.

When Giles was maybe 13 or 14, I started doing volunteerism. I did some things at work with the United Way. I did a lot of volunteering in my community during those corporate years. I was a CASA, a court appointed state advocate for children who are in state custody. I was a mentor for women in People helping People for women on welfare as they bridge the gap. I volunteered for literacy behind bars at the jail. I was an ESL tutor...a volunteer on United Way's day of caring. I can show you trees I've planted all over the Valley. I tutored at my local junior high. I was a Red Cross volunteer during the Olympics. I have a whole list of volunteering in the community.

It made me feel better. I guess I felt like I could make a difference. I'm quite a social person even though I do like working with computers because they don't bug me ...because it's just you. But I also have a social side, so I think my volunteerism was probably a need to be around people. And like when I was a CASA, I felt like I was doing something. Also, I'm not a consumer. So I feel if I have something to give then I should give it. I'm pretty tight with my money and giving my money—but I'll give my time. Some people don't want to give their time they'll just write a check for a hundred dollars. I'd rather give my time than write a check for hundred dollars just because I'm so frugal. I felt like I had something I could offer these women who are on welfare to help them bridge. And so I have felt I can do something. I can make a difference. I can change things and I should because I'm lucky and I hate to say this but I'm lucky that I was born in America. And I'm lucky that I'm white. I don't like saying "I'm lucky I was born in America" because I think America has a lot of problems and I think we hide all those problems. We are not perfect. We've done horrible things, but I think anybody born in this country or in Europe or any free country...I think it's their obligation to do something and not go shopping. That's how I feel about it. So I think that's the whole premise with me is that yes, you can make a difference. Yes, you can change the world and you should do it.

So in '92, I went with some friends to Kenya as a tourist, [and become] pen pals with a couple of Kenyans I met—that was before the Internet, so I was a pen pal. This is the first time I went to Kenya and it was the first, other than having been in Mexico, developing country trip. So we wrote letters, sometimes I would send them a little money or magazines...when I think about it now, I sent them Time magazines...so this was my philanthropy. I should've sent them \$40 so they could've gone and bought the magazines (what it cost to mail them). I sent the magazines because they said they couldn't afford them and they wanted to learn about the world, but I remember paying \$40 to send these magazines to Africa!

Giles was 17 or 18 and he was finishing up high school and it wasn't something I thought to myself: Giles finishes high school *so* I can do this. It's kind of interesting, you know, it's just there. It's not a consciousness, but I must've been somewhere and talked to someone about 'oh I want to go to an African country and to do something. *Through*

networking with people, I learned about Mohammed Yunus and microcredit. I realize that's what I wanted to do because I wanted to do something that wasn't a hand out, it was a hand up. I didn't even read his book until later, but hearing about him, just reading articles. So I learned about Mohammed Yunus and microcredit and decided that's what I wanted to do. I told Simon (my pen pal) in the letter about Mohammed Yunus and all about microcredit and told him to get five women together and have them come up with a plan. I told Simon, I'm coming *and* I'm not coming as a tourist. I took \$2000 of my own money and with that we started a microcredit group and I put kids in school.

That's what I did with the \$2000 and then when I came home, Bob, my boyfriend, said if you want to start a nonprofit I'll make a donation of \$500 but I want to get a tax deduction. So then I go to the library and I get a book. I sit there on Saturdays and Sundays when my friends are skiing. I'm reading this book about the IRS and I am very frightened of the IRS. I'm reading this book about starting nonprofits from the library and I'm afraid of the IRS and so I think, "I'm not going to do this." I call my very good friend in Portland and she says, "Freya, that's what they want you to do—they want you to give up." So it becomes a challenge and Freya never steps down from a challenge. So that's how the nonprofit started. I always figured maybe we'll raise \$5,000 a year—never figured we'd be raising \$50,000-\$60,000—a year.

I mean in the beginning with *my nonprofit* I didn't have to spend so many hours on it because it was growing, but then it kind of reached a critical mass and I can't do it myself. We even hired a part-time Executive Director and luckily she quit before we had to let her go because we can't afford to pay someone. What I wanted to do was step back and be the program manager. I don't like managing the board. They have said "If we performed on our jobs like we do on the board we'd be fired" but still I was always the one that had to prod them—so I don't want to do that. I told them all, 'I quit' *in* 2008 and then again at the first of 2011 I freaked out and threw a fit. *I* said "I gave you each one task and you have to do that one task because I can't do anymore. I said if you don't want to do it, its okay if we shut the nonprofit down because I've done my part. There was never a want or need to run a business, to be a boss to be a leader...I really just want to help people. I didn't know.

I just was doing it so I could get some money because I know you had to be legitimate if people are going to give you money—you have to incorporate in the state of Utah and you have to file with the IRS and you have to do all that stuff. So I did all that stuff but I didn't know I was going to have to do all this other shit. I didn't really realize that you have to operate as a business. Yes we always filed our taxes and every month and reconciled. We've always been square with the state. So all of that has always been done, but I guess I could say it was more run by the heart and slowly it has evolved so that were more mature so that we have more spreadsheets more ways of keeping track of things.

Why wasn't volunteering enough? I wanted to do 'more'. I want to 'touch' people, to make a difference. I want it to be 'real'. It is that innate desire I was born with.

I had to learn that I can't expect everyone to be like me about my nonprofit. When I went down with Utah Bolivia Partners, I didn't get that sense of satisfaction. It's like there's more and I guess for me, you know, I have to touch—that's being Freya. I need to touch the people and needing to do that and not being satisfied with going over with Choice because that's a lot of money to go over with Choice. One thing is probably because it is so expensive and I don't think I would feel if I went on one of their trips...I think I would come home and still be hungry. When I come home from Kenya I'm on the computer for about two weeks. I'm on the computer the whole time doing catch-up with Patrick, but I feel like I've done something. See I'm a doer—its back to that thing. Some people can write a check and feel good, but I have to do something. I don't want to run the show. I want someone else to do all of that, but I want to do.

For the last five years I've been putting in about 1,500 hrs. /year. And you know full-time employees work do about 2,000 hrs./yr.—I'd be in there doing stuff that I felt I had to do because they give me money, they trust me when they give me a donation. If you give me money, I take it very personally. I used to work on *the nonprofit* a lot, but now I'm not writing the grants that I did, I'm not working as much—*only* 20 hours a week now.

I feel like in the last year, that I've known where I've needed to be and I am finally moving there. It's like the alcoholic...they know they need to change but it's actually making the change—so I knew that something had to go. So I've known, but it takes time to get there so I can have more of a balance because as long as people want to donate as long as people still want to give money for women and children in Kenya I will do that but not at the mania as before. I just believe that if we have something we can give. That we should, so it's more like a balance—it's taken a while to get to that balance.

To have social consciousness, I think you have to have suffered. I don't know, I'm sure there are books written about this so I'm just totally off the top of my head, but I think you have to have suffered and maybe reached some self-actualization. You have to believe that you can change the world and I think you probably have to have gone through some suffering. There are probably people who've gone through suffering and become rich and never help. But through suffering, I think you have to have a desire and belief that you can change the world. *Also*, I think you have to be a doer and not a follower and that's me.

Joy's Story

I lived in the lily white suburbs of middle-class. But, my mother's side of the family was much more dominant in our lives and many of those family members were union railroad workers. My family had a very strong social democratic, liberal point of view. We didn't eat lettuce because of Caesar Chavez and the farm workers movement. We only wore American-made clothes. We were all about any kind of power struggle, particularly as it related to civil rights. All the Kennedys were God in our house. My dad always had a beer and a boilermaker. He was Irish Catholic and died of complications from alcoholism. I learned about social consciousness and political consciousness, but also had a pretty dysfunctional home life.

We had other values that were not rabble rising. We really valued music and my parents made choices to send me to piano lessons at a very nice music school. Another thing that was pretty high-value for my extended family was art. I had an aunt who took me three times to Europe to look at the great art of the world. Aunt Dolores was an educator *and* from the time I was 15 or 16, I went on her summer trip with her. This was another sort of remarkable, out-of-context experience for a girl from a suburban, lower middle-class family. I would not have had that opportunity because that was not something my parents were going to be able offer me as an opportunity. *Travel* planted the seed and the interest in learning about people and places that are very different. To the extent that that is loosely related to having empathy and understanding about people who are very different than me, then yeah that is how I would link *travel to social consciousness*.

Aunt Dolores spent every holiday and every summer vacation with us and had a very strong influence on my mother. My aunt was a union leader and so my mom just fell in step with the sister she thought was educated and informed. She was not as articulate nor as *socially* active. But my mother, even though we didn't have the means to be philanthropic, showed an empathy towards people with less power and privilege—even though she thought she virtually had no power and privilege, she still did. This *research* process has enabled me to recognize that there really were some wonderful things that she offered. We went to a church in the inner city, my dad didn't want to go, so we went to an all-black inner-city gospel church for several years—I was probably 8 to 10.

My mom was an at-home mom until our finances couldn't allow that anymore. I was in grade school—seven or eight when she went back to work *and* her first job was in the nonprofit world in public radio and television. We listen to NPR before NPR was cool to listen to. I think that was the beginning of my awareness that there are different kinds of work outside the home and some of it is corporate and some of it is nonprofit and some of it is political. My mother also ran for several local government posts as a place holder for the Democratic Party. Because we lived in such a Republican area, there would often be no opposition on the ballot so she would just run so that there would be an option—this sort of turned on a political awareness.

When I was probably in middle school, age 12 or 13, she left the nonprofit for a corporate job. She *followed the career path of* her surrogate mother, my great aunt Dolly, who lived with us and was a switchboard operator. There was an opening, and she took Dolly's job because Dolly was leaving. *Several years later*, when I was a junior in high school, the corporation [she worked for] said "you know you have a great personality for sales and we want to put you through our sales training program." She takes the promotion from switchboard operator to sales—no interim other than the training program. There are things like tests and she just falls apart. She doesn't think she can do it. She just wants to be a switchboard operator [again] and ultimately she goes under psychiatric care. She goes on disability. She never even goes on antidepressants because of the stigma. At that time she was still drinking and I think that had some influence because you really can't drink *while* on antidepressants. Back then she was under the care of a psychiatrist who could write prescriptions and he wanted to put her on antidepressants but she refused. I don't think she was together enough to say, "This isn't working for me. I'd like to go back to my other job." Plus, I think they already hired someone. Frankly, I think she was jumping to assumptions because if the corporation had had one whit of sense, it would've been a lot cheaper to let her go back to her old job, the switchboard operator job, than to pay for her disability for 20 years. She's getting a pension from that company. *She worked for the company for* five or six years and they've been paying for disability for over 20 years.

She believed, and rightly so, my dad was an unreliable income earner. He was in commission-only sales. Over the course of my life, he lost his job several times. I believe that it was performance related, but very much a factor of his alcohol abuse which was becoming increasingly problematic—he was drinking really heavily at night. My dad was a very gifted woodworker/craftsman. We had a little tract home. Nothing special about it, nothing interesting, but he built window seats and bookcases and all kinds of things that added value, that were beautiful. But anything he did in the last ten years *had* a very vivid shift in quality, so that had to be playing out in other ways besides his leisure. So that's why I think she thought maybe she could be a more significant breadwinner. On the other hand, sales was the definition of his unreliable income. . so maybe as a part of her breakdown [she thought], "Oh my God, What did I just do? I lost the job that I can do for an uncertain income!"

Neither of my parents went to college—I *am the first generation to go to college* and a lot of first-generation college students are considered the golden children. I was considering that one author *I read* talked about this and was saying that you are the one that is fulfilling their desires...filling their unfulfilled mission...their life income opportunities. I think for my parents, maybe they didn't understand the distinction between a college degree and an ivy-league college degree, but I did. They were so supportive of the process—whatever direction I picked, I think it was okay. They were just happy I was in school—thinking I was going to have a different trajectory than their own. Neither one of them felt very successful. That's a relative thing because I lived a very nice little life growing up.

I went to public high school and went to community college. As a result of my mother having a nervous breakdown, I felt like I couldn't go to the University I was intending to go to. I surprised myself with how well I did in college. I realized I could do more than Niagara University, *so I transferred to Cornell*. I would say that the biggest awareness for my social conscience that I relate to being at Cornell is that I was in a college at the University that had very polarizing areas of study and socially conscious action. I was at Cornell University in the school of Industrial Labor Relations so there were union organizers in class next to corporate HR people. That tension was always present so I have to say that the lessons learned around how to navigate polarizing points of view were pivotal in that setting. In upper division classes, it became much less of an issue because all the collective-bargaining and legal organizing classes were very focused, and you wouldn't find an HR person in the class. Nor would you find one of the labor oriented students in a high-level compensation and benefits analysis class. But earlier on, we always cross pollinated and it was very interesting—it was just very different belief systems and orientations. So it is interesting, given all the union background in my childhood, that I went on the course of HR. I remember writing essays saying that my labor background made me uniquely suited to understand and execute an inclusive HR strategy that would minimize labor relations issues. I have a bachelor's of science in Industrial Labor Relations, *but* I was pretty much always aligned with HR. I was always able to articulate a belief that there is a purpose for unions and when that purpose is right, a company has to deal with that and respond to it.

I was hired out of Cornell by the Providence Journal Company, and I was working in Providence. I was primarily working in the cable side of the broadcasting division but after the labor drive they deployed me to the radio stations because of the problems. *I met my husband John, who was a new Harvard MBA*. He was hired and made these changes which resulted in employees filing for protection under the national labor relations act—the right to organize. *This* was the reason I was assigned to the broadcast division of *the* company. There was an election *and* the union just barely lost. There are still obvious issues and the company throws some resources at it, trying to make this a touchy-feely place...writing a new handbook, bringing on new benefits. So I'm there, five days a week, falling in love with the boss. Not my boss, but the boss.

[John] was a Harvard MBA and definitely on a fast-track trajectory. When we first got married, we bought a house that was nicer than anything I ever lived in and nicer than anything our parents have lived in. I was aware that he was so smart and with his educational background, he was an upwardly mobile guy. I was aware of that and the way I responded to that was in fear—which was definitely a value from my family of origin. I suppose in a way there was the message of, "I'm not deserving of this sweet life." So I lived in a kind of waiting for the other shoe to drop, until I just couldn't argue the fact that we were not going to be in the poor house. But when it got to be realistic that *low income* wasn't what the outcome would be, than the notion of cognitive dissonance set in for me. I would say that probably happened when I was doing an amazing amount of volunteerism—when I had my hand in every possible volunteer opportunity.

Right after I got married, *we moved to South Carolina* and I was under employed. This was in Greenville, and I was volunteering at the Shriner's hospital and I had a little consulting business in HR and worked for the state of South Carolina, traveling and explaining employee benefits. I had a professional career identity that was in HR management, but that was not recognized in a right to work state, or valued. So I was doing things, but not full time. I had moved, I was a newlywed. I had all these different life altering things happening at once. Without that career identity and the fact that I had all those other life changing identities at one time, I turned to that old social consciousness that was introduced to me in my family of origin. I used that as a way to self-identify. I did that after John was born and after Anna was born and then we moved to Jackson, Mississippi in 1991—I would say that is where some kind of switch was flipped. I didn't reinitiate my business so I lost that identity and I went over the moon with volunteerism. I mean nursery school, art museums, Habitat for Humanity, the Symphony, my church. I was paying more in babysitting money than I ever earned.... I wasn't employed there, but even when I was earning. It was a very interesting choice in retrospect, it was also in tandem with my parents' marriage splitting up and a complete cutoff from my mother.

My mom divorced *my father*, but because I stayed in that neutral place and because she held such contempt towards him, [she broke off relations with me]. Blame is a natural experience in my family of origin and I think blame has a lot to do with guilt. I think the way to shirk yourself of that guilt around blame is doing good works. Especially in Mississippi, when my parents were divorcing and my mother was so resentful of me having any relationship with my father, there was a complete cut off for almost a year between my mom and I. I mean, if your mother doesn't love you...that's pretty big stuff. I had a strong marriage, but you know that you want your mom to love you and when that's not part of your reality, you're going to go looking for validation in other places, in ways that can make you feel whole again. So that, I guess, is something that I wasn't really paying attention to—*why* I was so unbelievably active in Mississippi. You know there was a laundry list of things I did in four years—things most wouldn't do in 20 years.

I'm clearly saying that my parent's divorce and the cut off with my mother had a fair amount of impact on the degree to which I became active in social justice causes in Mississippi. The cut off with my mother, as a consequence of their divorce.... I was looking for that love somewhere, and my natural inclination was to turn to good works—not necessarily just social justice but volunteerism. I was also increasingly turning to volunteerism and nonprofit work as a way to 'equal the scales'. So in the one environment where we were a big fish in a small pond, which is Mississippi, I really went overboard. There was another issue at play there, which was I was a Yankee and I was in social relationships with a lot of natives—I didn't see the world in the way they did, and I was doing some of this work thinking that I could teach those surrounding me a different way—which was very naïve and altruistic, but when in Rome one has to do what one has to do.

This certainly has to do with how we had housekeepers. I would go to Ms. Dot's house and we would have Christmas together for a little bit and that was not done. Then I would talk about it with my peers and their eyes were as big as the earth, they just couldn't *believe it*. So that was pushing the envelope of socially accepted ways to interact with people of color. *Ms. Dot was our* housekeeper and nanny. I did not work, she worked 40 hours a week—she was the help. It was more difficult having a toddler, but I could've taken care of them. But apparently in Mississippi you are supposed to have help—so I got help! I met two women, one was the wife of a colleague of John's and one was a woman I met when I was bringing our infant and 13-month-old to mother's morning out—both of them would sort of tell me how it's done. Both of them were Junior League.

With regards to joining Junior League, I just dodged that bullet because I was presented the invitation with white gloves at a luncheon, just as we were moving. I really would not have wanted to join, but I'd don't think living in Jackson—I don't think that saying no is really an option. You have women.... it's all very mysterious. You don't know they're looking at you, you don't know they're putting you up for nomination. You have friends that are getting all this historical data on you and presenting you as a nominee and they vote on you. I mean it's pretty much voted on before you even get there, before you're told. They presented it to me and I hadn't told them I was leaving yet. *Afterwards*, they said, "We understand that you will be leaving, so maybe you can do it when you go to California. It would be a great way to make friends." When I got to California, I learned that the Junior League in San Jose was full of professional women. It's a self-selecting group—you decide you want to be in and you tell them why and you're in. So I joined the Junior League in California and was fully engaged in volunteerism with Junior League during the provisional year. The provisional year is like boot camp and you do the crap volunteer jobs. You have a provisional class which supposedly gets you lifelong friends, *which* just wasn't my experience. It was a way to meet people, a way to make friends. I would not have considered joining when I got to California, but I figured out that the design and the corporate nature was so very different. The self-selecting aspect tells you that it's a very different group—a self-motivated, active, conscious group. That's a very different model than white gloved invitation presentation.

One of the volunteer activities John and I did together was habitat for humanity. We were involved in Jackson, in California and also here in Utah. He and I went to the Jimmy Carter work camp where we built a couple dozen houses in several days and we published a daily newspaper for the camp for several hundred sponsors. It was a pretty satisfying experience to do as a couple. I think our kids have really learned about volunteerism through seeing me, but I think there's something missing if you don't do that work as a family or with your significant other because only when you step into that which gives someone meaning in their lives can you ever...can you really be a partner with that person. You know, there's also something else I get out of it—developing my own skills as an organized professional communicator. There was great satisfaction in running a three-day building blitz with 120 volunteers and having everybody do what

they needed to do in a way that was satisfying for the volunteers and moved the project forward. It was pretty satisfying—just in terms of execution. What else I got out of it is we always had our kids involved and I can say this in retrospect, not that it was deliberate in the moment, but the fact that our two young adults really understand that part of what it means to be either a grown-up or a good community member.... So that's another thing I get out of it—watching our families social consciousness develop. That's pretty satisfying.

I don't have to work full-time and that I have the ability to give back—there is some guilt there because I come from pretty humble stock and I recognize that this is not a humble life. Just the ability to say that travel is a family value is elitist and it's a notable conflict when you're working on affordable housing initiatives and then leaving to go to the Caribbean. It's just a lot of dissonance. I don't really recall anyone throwing it up in my face, but it's definitely something that is running around in the back of my mind.

I moved to California in 1995. My kids were entering school by then and I became a huge volunteer and supporter of public schools in every way other than being in the PTSO. I was doing student art education and mostly in-classroom stuff. I ran several fundraisers and really got committed to public schools. California used to have great public schools, but by the time we moved there it was 20 years after prop 11 which was the downfall of funding for California public schools. It was an interesting challenge to communicate that there were public schools that still have great value—a particularly interesting challenge in an affluent community where people bailed from public schools. When we lived in California we vacationed in Oregon and so I tried fly fishing in Oregon. It became my church, I found myself surrounded by really interesting, unique women who also love to do it and it's given me another outlet besides nonprofit work to be noticed.... and I'm only coming to that conclusion just now.

We moved to Utah at the end of 2002. I immediately found the habitat for humanity chapter here, and within a blink of the eye, I was the Board President. I was heavily engaged the Project for Deeper Understanding and different volunteer aspects in our church and at the Park City school district. I was really struggling. When you're an only child you think, "If it is to be, it's up to me." That's very much the way you think and your belief system. And I think that has influenced a lot of decisions I have made and it has encouraged me to take on ridiculous responsibility that should not be considered by one person and that is certainly the story with habitat here in the mountains. It was a very dysfunctional board. There was no staff and I was getting some life coaching. She did an analysis of instinctual orientations, so it's not personality—this is more decision-making orientation. My life coach did this for me and I come to find out I am very unsuited for nonprofit work—primarily because of an orientation towards responsibility. I'm very high on responsibility and execution—I will execute. So when she said that, I had to go full fetal for weeks, if not more than a month, because that was my identity. She suggested that I start playing like a child again to understand to take me back to when I could've made any decision that wasn't about responsibility. What are the things that brought you joy? I identified with training and being a docent and when I was doing

media press conferences ...it was those moments of education or public speaking that really gave me energy. I think that was all about a midlife crisis and trying to figure out if what I was doing was really what I want to do.

She does the inventory in 2006...I just died. I resigned from all of my nonprofit work in 2006 for a couple of years. I just hung out with my kids, I didn't have any obligations. I decide to pull out of my nonprofit work and focus on my family, my marriage and the last two years of my kids being home. But then I had a lot of time on my hands. When I started gnawing on "okay, well what will I do, because here I've made essentially a career of philanthropic nonprofit work and, oh it doesn't suit me well. Now what?"

One thing I think is very impactful is the development of female support systems that started in my late 30s and early 40s. The women that I'm thinking of are not involved in my nonprofit activities but they certainly shaped my life during that time. These are friends, people who've come in and gone out of my life—most have come in and stayed. But the relation to that has to do with the fact that I'm an only child. I never really learned how to build closeness with siblings. I'm very good with making friends with people who are older than me.

When I had been doing this work with the life coach, I was processing the information from the analysis, such as nonprofit work really isn't good for me. For me, for the first time in 15 years, I am not doing something in the community. I'm lost so I need a kick in the pants. The nature of the presentation was personal.... what's next? I did a presentation to *my women's* group called "a kick in the pants." I felt like I had been spinning my wheels for a good year. I had pulled back from my nonprofit engagement but I still didn't know what the next step was. Through my kick in the pants presentation I got clear that I needed to go to school. It is not insignificant that this was right as my kids were graduating high school—right about the time I was going to empty nest.

Right before I started at Westminster, I had a near-death experience *during a scuba diving incident* that made me so aware that I needed to live life every day. It was a really powerful experience that made me clarify that I am ready to do something new with my life and that's when I called Peggy up on the phone and three months later I was a student at Westminster. This was in the fall of 2009 and I started in January 2010.

The performing arts foundation is my nonprofit work right now. I got involved because it is a perfect blend of our family's loves and interests. We try to negotiate with every agent for the performers to do in-service for the students. That's always been part of our work, but then we decided to do drop-in free tutoring for at-risk students the drop-in tutor system is being funded through a variety of donors in grants but not through the arts Council necessarily. The tutoring center space is donated and we write small grants for lights and keeping the doors open. That 'world spinning' that I was going through, prior to starting at Westminster and when I did the kick in the pants presentation, felt like I didn't know where I was headed after my children were launched is very similar to my

dissonance now in my nonprofit work. We identified our top priorities 15 months ago, but we never seem to be able to do the work to address those top priorities—we are constantly fighting fires.

I am thriving and excelling at what I'm choosing to do right now. John can see it. I think it's very attractive, I think he is more in love with me now than he has been in our entire marriage. When someone, and I'm getting this question all the time—which is great to make my answer for every time a little different, “so what are you going to do with this degree?” There is a lot of uncertainty about what I'm going to do with this degree. *However*, I think what I have learned from this *research* process, as well as my own masters study, is that education has been such a theme in important people in my life and in my own story—that I can probably execute my social consciousness through education. Education, I believe is the path to self-discovery as well as delivering marketable product to the workforce—but I can choose in higher education ways in which I can influence the have-nots and maybe give a hand up. In terms of mid-life influence on my social conscience, I just think knowing it's not appropriate...meaning serving on a nonprofit board where I'm the only person that gives a rip—it's important, to know that that's not a healthy environment for me. That doesn't mean that my social conscience can't be executed in other ways, but it certainly has informed me that doing board work—I mean I just don't know how it happens that I start a board and within no time I become the chair or the president. You know why it is? Because there aren't other people who care or are able to devote the time. But that doesn't mean that it has to be me and I have to beat my head against the wall. There's got to be other ways to make an impact without personal damage and that's what I'm in search of.

I think the experience of being an only child is a pretty profound theme *in my volunteerism*—a fact that not only influences who I am but how I relate to people. As an only child you don't have the built-in relationship experience of siblings, so you're a little queered about how you relate to peers. We've moved a lot. I recognize that if I'm going to be happy in a new place. I have to cultivate relationships ...they're not going to come to me and as an only child you learn how to cultivate relationships because you don't have any built-in to your family, not peer relationships. I think that is the importance of developing nonfamily relationships that goes hand-in-hand with being an only child.

Why do I volunteer? I'm going to guess that there is another lifetime experience that is echoing—to understand that not all people live such a blessed life. What can I do? What can I do to make a difference? I'm not sure it's deliberate. I just seem to be called to do work with people that were not as comfortable as myself—it just seemed like the right thing to do. I guess that's intuition, because I don't think anybody ever said. “Well don't do the arts because that's bourgeois”—I never heard that. But there's something...you know, you have limited time. Do you get into affordable housing or do you do the zoo? You know, when I was in Mississippi, I did the zoo and affordable housing—I did it all! But I think as you get older, your wisdom increases about discernment and limited time and a variety of things you value outside of community service. My gosh, I value time with my family! That's not an endless runway and

selectivity comes into play. I seem to be called, whether it was through our church's ministry...I was called to make a difference with people in need rather than with people who wanted more. I would *also* go back to personal identity—I need to have intellectual stimulation...guilt, you know—all these blessings. I feel I need to.... I mean, only until this last organization, the majority of my interests have been around people of need.... not necessarily cultural, not the arts. Although I have a passion for the arts, that wasn't where I happened to choose to spend my time. *Also*, I think that maybe the connection is knowing that life is not fair, and I've certainly had a lot of blessings. There must be people in need that must be in need because life isn't fair. So what is it that I can do to right that wrong?

Julia's Story

I was born in 1940 in Charlottesville, Virginia. I'm pretty sure that my mother had a lot to do with my social consciousness and my directions in life for good and for bad. There were three kids, each of us was 21 months apart. I was the oldest and my perception of myself and the family's [perception] was that I was serious, the responsible one. My brother next to me was funny and very personable and everybody loved him best—this was my perception. My little brother was born, and a year after he was born my mother ended up in a psychiatric hospital in New York. By the time she was hospitalized, she was psychotic but she was also conscious that she was, and was trying to control it. She was hearing voices—had ideas that people were telling her things. She was a very artistic, dreamy kind of personality and her mother had been extremely controlling.

Her mother (*my grandmother*) was the first child of Lyon Gardiner Tyler, who is John Tyler's (the 10th American President's) first son and the president of William and Mary College. She was extremely bright and went to Wellesley *but* then she came back to Virginia. What could she do? What did women do? She married my grandfather, who was a professor, and he ended up at the University of Virginia. At the time there was no place to put all this creative energy. She had an ability to lead and so she did it with her children. She reviewed books and she gave talks—she was a club person and things like that. She encouraged my grandfather who wanted to write a book. He started the Virginia Quarterly, the magazine for the University of Virginia, which was so well respected. He ended up being the Dean of the Graduate School *mostly* because she thought that that was a good idea. All of the men in my family were more on the passive side. Very intellectual, sweet men and most of the women were driving forces. Grandmother was so controlling. Mother was very beautiful and [grandmother] wanted her to be a socialite and mother's sister was the one that was not as pretty, according to grandmother. I mean, she put them in boxes. She bought their clothes. She bought mother's clothes when she was in college and mother didn't have the confidence to say no. Whereas my aunt, she developed little devious ways of avoiding things. Mother was serious and very thoughtful—she was an artist and she was sort of bohemian, [but] she had been brought up in this very, very controlled old Virginia culture—the first families of Virginia. Everybody smooths everything over and you wear the right clothes and all of that, so there was this constant conflict. She graduated from high school when she was 16 *and* she wanted to go to Swarthmore. But my grandmother would not let her go away so she went to Sweet Briar—which is sort of the socialite women's finishing school.

When my mother was getting so sick, she would stay up at night typing what the voices said to her—to show them on paper. Finally she was so distressed by what was going on, that she asked a neighbor to take care of us and she got on a train and went to Charlottesville to go to the hospital at the University of Virginia. The doctors that saw her said she should be in Virginia for treatment to be close to us but my father put her in a hospital in New York where my psychiatrist Uncle made arrangements. The next thing I

knew.....what I remember is walking into the house and I was crying. I wanted the stuffed animal that I was so attached to and the house was empty. I just remember looking for...I think it was a lamb. I've gone to that memory and done a lot of crying about it...just aware that it was like losing a parent entirely. It was a death and then there was going to school and explaining where my mother was, saying that "she's in the hospital" and not really understanding what was going on.

I was turning five at this time and Jim was [a baby], so he was given to my aunt and uncle—all three of us were put with different people. My mother's sister took Jim, my father's brother took my middle brother John, and I was put with my paternal grandparents. I lived with them for [a little more than] four years, *and* at the time they lived in a big old Victorian house *and* had Edmonia as their help. She was a nurturing person for me *and* these grandparents adored me—I was the first grandchild.

I don't think *Edmonia* had children but she had a niece, Sally Ann. Edmonia brought Sally Ann over to play and we were skating and we had our arms around each other—it was just before I turned six. We were on the sidewalk in front of the house, which was On Main Street. Grandmother and Edmonia came out on the front steps and called us in and we were never allowed to play with each other again. Sally didn't come back to the house. ...I didn't understand it. That experience raised my consciousness about this inequality and it didn't make any sense to me. It was a conflict for me because these were people I loved and they cared about these other people but somehow there was a difference, and that was confusing to me and disturbing to me. I grew up in segregation. My *other* grandmother fired her help because she had an NAACP card *but* then she hired her back because she couldn't get along without her. I witnessed her doing that, so that was a huge impact on my consciousness of the inequality of African-American people in our society.

I was very introspective and thinking. I spent a lot of time in the library across the street reading books because I didn't have a lot of friends to play with. I was very solitary, spent a lot of time in the yard alone and my grandmother was very particular about who I could play with. I could not play with anybody that she didn't approve of. I had one friend on the street that I was allowed to play with but I couldn't just stop and play with her on the way home from school. It had to be arranged.... I was often playing by myself, throwing a tennis ball against the wall.

My grandmother had me join the church when I was nine before I went to live with my mother because she didn't want me to be an Episcopalian. She did really lay a foundation as far as my faith ...there was this little pamphlet called the Upper Room she used to read to me. We would read it every night. Every Sunday we went to church and Sunday school with my grandpa as long as he was alive.

My paternal grandfather was a congressman for Virginia, *but* died when I was seven. It was around Christmas time and he had been home for about a day or two and had a heart attack—it was not expected, he was 72. It was like he had come home and he

was there and then he wasn't. That was also the way it was with mother because we'd been at the neighbors and then she was hospitalized.

My grandmother and I were quite close, we talked a lot and as I said, she really shaped me as far as formal religious faith. I like church. My spirituality is quite universal. I think all of the major religions the truths are in...a lot of the other things have been ruined by man. At the time, I think it was a good foundation and also probably established an understanding of Jesus. Jesus's teachings were definitely a model for me. Still, I do feel I follow Jesus [although] I don't see him as necessarily God's son any more than the rest of us. I think he was very in touch with God. I don't know if he was the son of man or all of that ...but those basic premises which I do try to live that has a lot to do with my social consciousness. So that was definitely a big foundation.

I was 9 1/2 when it was decided that [I would live with my mother]. [My parents] tried to get back together, but they couldn't. At the time my mother came out of the hospital, she really wanted some freedom. She had been befriended by some women in the hospital who were lesbian and there is the thought that maybe she was so long in White Plains because of her interest or affection with the women that were gay—she was probably bisexual. She told me she was there for so long and she longed for comfort and affection. In that day homosexuality [was treated as a mental disorder]. Angie was discharged before mother was [and] living in the DC area—they were talking about having an apartment and she told my father that she would rather live with her than with him. As my father described it, they were going to get back together and would bring the kids home and everything will be wonderful...she was just not there.

I went to live with my mother. My father was getting married to my stepmother and my brothers were going to live with them—It was just a whole different world. That was when I said to myself, I literally said to myself, "I'm not going to let myself be surprised again." I can remember I was walking home from school and I was going to take control of my life. I was settled with my mother in an apartment in Alexandria, Virginia. Mother had a college degree with a major in French. She had no work experience, so she had to work in department stores, doing jobs that, with her personality, were not easy for her. She took speed writing because she couldn't learn shorthand. She worked for an attorney. She had a lot of trouble keeping jobs because she would get paranoid about something and she would get very self-conscious and not do well. I think just being in the hospital so long had a lot to do with some of her paranoia. I think it was this feeling of being different—they didn't have any medication. That's why she was there so long and also because she was attracted to women, which was *considered* another part of the illness.

My mother was very free and artistic and accepting of all kinds. She was an artist and she didn't have any problem walking around the apartment nude. I had been in this very Victorian household and my grandmother was extremely strict. I was embarrassed [because] we were next to the playground. I was sure that everyone could see in and I remember feeling ashamed about that. My mother, when she got out of the hospital, had

her struggles and her crying—it was hard as a child. I dreaded those parts, but she also would talk to me and she told me always to talk about my feelings. She was very socially conscious and really carried the guilt of the southern whites and what had been going on with the blacks. She really took on the whole racial thing very personally. She needed to pay homage to what our heritage was—as far as segregation. I kind of believe she gave me that consciousness. She was such a sensitive person. She did everything that she could do. I think that was part of her personality. She was born at the wrong time—a very sensitive, artistic, intellectual person that saw the inequities.

Maybe the guilt was she couldn't do enough. She was focused on healing the world...what was wrong with the world and how could it be helped. [She] loved science [but] she didn't have a lot of education in science because she was at a girl's school in Charlottesville in the 30s. Something that did influence me was that she had all these theories. She loved to talk intellectually, but she wouldn't have a discussion. She wanted you to hear her perspectives, [but] she was afraid of your response because she had been found crazy. She became a compulsive talker. I don't think she was when she first came out of the hospital, but she became more and more that way, which made it really hard. She had all these ideas but she didn't take courses or get some reality testing, so her ideas were never tested.

So my goal [was] to be different from her—I always thought it was very important. *If* I have an intuition, I wanted the facts first. *Also*, I wanted to belong, I didn't want to be different. As I think about it, in my whole growing up, I felt different and I wanted to be part of the group. I was aware, my observing ego was quite aware, that it was important for me to be involved in leadership, organizing, or anything that was going to be happening because I didn't like feeling on the fringe.

My grandmother died when I was 18. I was at Duke and I came up for the funeral. The tradition was *that* the body wasn't left at the funeral home, it was taken to the *family* home. The body was in a casket in the parlor with the door closed and you could go in and visit. My stepmother brought me in so I could see her. She was the first person I had seen that had died. I was only 10 when I left her and of course throughout my teen years I would go and see her, but she was a tough old bird.

I decided when I was in ninth grade I wanted to go to Duke. I [also] realized pretty early on that the liberal arts were my field—I love psychology and I love sociology as well as English. But it was a practical thing. My mother had said “you need to do something you can fall back on.” My grandmother paid for my education and the nursing school was less expensive because I could do some work at the hospital—I was very grateful that she was allowing me to go to Duke. I was not a person to run to Utah and start a nonprofit at that point in my life—I was afraid to go out too far. There was a lot of anxiety. I didn't have a clear sense of confidence of who I was and I was paying more attention to other people's rules and what I should do, *but* certainly there was an independent streak. I wanted to go to Duke. I didn't want to go to a Virginia school and I probably could've gotten into any that I wanted to, but I wanted to go off. I did have this

feeling that if I really wanted to do something that I could be successful with it. That was something I think my father influenced, he was very encouraging. I certainly was driven not to be like mother, and my father was very encouraging.

What I learned in college was that psychology and education were where my strengths were. I like knowing about health, but it was more in prevention. Prevention has always been my interest, and certainly this was motivated by my experience and with my mother's mental health. Prevention just makes sense to me. I did public health as a student and I liked it and I also liked psychiatry a lot. During my psychiatric rotation, I read everything and I would spend extra hours in the library reading everything I could get my hands on. I am a good listener and I know it's an art—but certainly I was more passionate because of my mother.

My husband Ken and I were fixed up during the junior prom and we started dating. I think we had a very codependent relationship. *When* Robert asked me to marry him, I was dating and I was having a good time and probably if I had had the confidence to just say “no, I just want to date” it probably would have been better for me. I still just don't have confidence with men. When he was in his third year he convinced me that we should get pinned so that we could see how we were together, which of course stopped me from dating. Robert asked me to marry him in my junior year at Duke and I felt it was too soon but I didn't want to hurt his feelings. There was a sexual attraction and there was a caring for him and I needed the security.

When Robert and I married in Alexandria after being graduated at the Naval Academy, he was transferred to South Carolina and so we went to Charleston and I worked at the Medical College of the University of South Carolina for a year in the psychiatric ward. Duke really encouraged nurses to ask questions and to stand up to doctors and if we didn't think the doctor was making a safe recommendationwere encouraged to question it and not just accept it, so there was a lot of education in that area. I was working at the Medical College and we were passing out medications and we weren't involved in the clinical teams, weren't involved in therapy for the patients—we were just glorified helpers and I hated it. So the following year I decided to work in public health because it was more autonomous and I realized I needed to be able to make decisions and feel good about them.

My first job after graduating from Duke, before marriage, at the D. C. Department of Health was, mostly with African-Americans in the poverty areas of Washington, DC. At that time, public health nurses mostly made home visits. We wore little striped uniforms and walked around the streets. We were out there on the streets of the neighborhood that a lot of people would have been afraid to walk on, but we felt kind of protected by our uniform—people were respectful. We mostly saw mothers with babies or people with chronic illnesses. Certainly other things as well, but those were really common things in the caseload. My supervisor at the Public Health Center was this huge African-American woman. There was myself and two girls who just graduated from Syracuse University, we were all Caucasian, and then a lovely woman who was a few

years older who graduated from Catholic University who was African-American. Mrs. Kerrick [my supervisor] was probably at least 6 feet tall and maybe four and a half feet wide. She was just a big, big boned woman. She had a long career working in public health. She took us all under her wing and she had this deep voice. Once she said “I think I need to go with you on this visit because it’s very dangerous.” She was concerned because they were old brownstone homes but there were multiple families that lived there and she was afraid I might not be safe. So that’s what got my attention to the kind of work I was doing. I loved *this work*. I wasn’t afraid at all. I loved it.

In my late 20s and early 30s, the Vietnam War was going on and my husband was in the Navy as a pilot. *He* went to Vietnam three times and it was also when I was having children, so my focus really was *on my family*, although I worked as a school nurse in a small rural community in California. That was where I became interested in family life education which sort of combined my interest in public health and community health. I had this job, which was part-time, but I was the only school nurse for a rural school district. I had kids of all ages and I enjoyed the school environment. I had a chance to be creative in that the only sex education they had was in assemblies and I thought that was silly. I said, “No we can’t do assemblies if you want kids to ask questions,” so I started taking more of a leadership role. I had the opportunity to because I was the only school nurse. I got involved in doing that and it gave me an awareness of really enjoying independence and having creative ideas as a professional. I began thinking I really wanted to get my Master’s degree. I hadn’t really been thinking beyond doing part-time nursing -Robert saw it as a hobby for me. I didn’t really see it as a total hobby but I was definitely working it around my marriage, our life. That was kind of when I realized that I wanted a career.

He was gone in ‘69 and when he came back he was home for two years. He was very depressed after the second tour in Vietnam and that was hard. He was jealous of [*our son*] Scott who was the light of my life. I would be out cutting the lawn and he would be sitting in his recliner, just sort of staring at the wall. I didn’t understand it and I thinkhe wasn’t drinking all the time, but when he did drink, he drank a lot. He just had moods that I hadn’t seen before. Our homecoming after the second tour was really terrible. He wanted me to do all these Japanese things...he thought it would be nice if I would pull his fingers and walk on his back. I had a little boy and I was looking forward to having help, and he was looking forward to being taken care of. So it wasn’t a good homecoming. Then he got ready to deploy again.

I got pregnant with Derek as soon as he got back from the third tour. They wanted to send Robert to the Midway—the carrier his squadron had been on. They were sending the Midway to Japan and he had one more year left with his squadron. He fought those orders, and was able to get transferred to the Armed Forces Staff College at Norfolk. My mother lived in Virginia Beach and of course all my family lives in Virginia. We were at the Armed Forces Staff College for six months *and* I got pregnant with Stephanie during that time. Derek *was born in 1973 and was* 10 lbs. 4 oz.—I didn’t really want to get pregnant right away but I didn’t want to not get pregnant. Robert got stationed at the

safety center in Norfolk and we found a house in Virginia Beach, and moved there. Stephanie was born in the Portsmouth Naval Hospital, which is about a half hour from Virginia Beach. Of course my career is on hold—I'm having babies. I had three kids and so I'm very much at home, not doing any kind of part-time job.

In 1977, Robert decides he wants to get out of the military. He had been in for 14 years, *but* we made the decision together to get out *of the Navy* and put up with some of the hardship, but it was also a lot of adjustment. I wouldn't say we had the closest relationship at that point, from then on he got more and more obsessive compulsive. I mean there were funny things in a way—he went to all the grocery stores and made floor plans of them. Then he rearranged all the kitchen cabinets. I had them in one way and he changed them all and listed everything on the cabinet door. When I was home, I was doing the cooking and it was very confusing and disruptive.

During this time, I was working as a public health nurse, in family planning counseling—people on birth control and pregnancy and that kind of thing. I met a nurse who was working for the mental health agency in a prevention and consultation unit *who said* they had a nurse position *opening*. I applied for that and *it* was my first opportunity to get into mental health. My job became to train volunteers in the Systematic Training for Effective Parenting program. That was a hugely pivotal job and that's what *my nonprofit* is based on. I had to take training in the class to be able to teach it and that was helpful in our own parenting, but it also caused some problems between Robert and me because I was becoming the parenting expert. I would really cringe at some of the ways that he was parenting—Scott especially. There were issues there, plus I was just gaining confidence.

I went for a Master's degree to the Virginia Commonwealth University in the school of nursing. I finished my class work in June of '83 and it took me until December to get my thesis done. When I graduated, Robert had said that he was very proud of me and he knew that that was something I needed to do, but he thought it would be the end of our marriage. From then on I tried my best to balance everything. I wouldn't see clients past six o'clock so I could be home to fix dinner. I tried to do things together as a family and as a couple, but I sensed that he just wasn't going to try. He had sort of a passive aggressive kind of thing. He might not get home till seven, but if he did happen to get home early for a change at five and I wasn't there, he resented it. There wasn't any real flexibility with him and especially [with] Scott, as the target child. All of us would avoid putting ourselves [out there].

Robert was extremely critical of Scott and it really made a problem with our marriage. Even worse, we were already becoming less like each other and more ourselves, and then trying to parent Scott was a real divide. He had a lot of really cruel things to say about Scott. He said them privately to me but it just broke my heart and I'm sure that Scott picked up the energy. For example, he said this in front of good friends of ours... we were going out, and he said "every time I see Scott I just want to throw up." He said things like that all the time. It was in those years between 87 and 90—I guess and I

just felt so helpless and I felt angry at Robert. Before I used to share everything the kids said, I mean we would talk about it and I was very consciously aware of what I thought were the hallmarks of marriage, of being open to one another [going away]. I was protecting the kids from Robert's anger and criticism, especially Scott. Derek was the second son and he was really good at just about anything. He made friends easily, he made mostly A's but he was very interested in a well-rounded kind of life. He was on the cross country team and the kids on that team developed a special friendship. It was nice and they didn't get involved in drugs. Stephanie, I knew was going to be...I could just tell that she was the one that was going to be really vulnerable—she could be drawn to follow peers. She was not confident. She was very shy but she was also much more willing to speak her mind and she would meet her father head on and argue with him about things. Robert was extremely conservative and that had [become] a real problem for us because I wasn't and he [was becoming] more and more conservative.

My divorce was not the crisis of that time as much as it became almost a release. It was a struggle because I was still trying to keep a family together *but* becoming more and more aware. Robert got so he was isolating the kids from Scott. He wouldn't let them go see Scott because he was using marijuana. Scott was becoming more and more isolated, so I would see him during the day. Robert would play golf all weekend, so he would come over. He at one point asked me if he could get some help because he was so depressed. I tried to get my own bank account *which became* a problem—we only had one bank account. I said, "I'd just like *an account* so I can buy things for you and have my own money," and *Robert* became extremely defensive. I thought "this is sick!" I was saving money in my jewelry box so I could pay for Scott to go to the psychotherapist. We had health insurance but Robert didn't want *to use it*. [He said], "He's just a bad boy. He's not sick." So, there would be times when I was crying about Scott and worried about Scott and Robert would totally ignore me like I wasn't crying.

My fear of confrontation was so strong, and I'm sure that was partly *due to* my mother because she was so intimidated by any kind of aggressive or confident men, so I had difficulty with that. By that time I had gone back to a therapist primarily to give me a reality test and support. What I didn't do with Robert that was different than before was that I didn't get intimidated when he started blustering and yelling and screaming. I would just walk away, so he didn't have anybody to threaten. I began to realize that nothing happened. He was trying to control people with his yelling. So I just kind of detached.

Robert entered therapy, *and after* he had been seeing *a therapist* about two months, we were on the deck and he said 'I want to see what it would be like to live on my own, and get my own apartment'. I felt like a butterfly being released, and I immediately could see myself going to the beach. I had already been thinking about those kinds of things. I also felt kind of guilty because he was setting me free and I hadn't taken the steps myself. I felt weak in that way. I came to it in therapy that I married my mother. From my psychotherapist's perspective, it's a pattern that a lot of people do—they marry people who are in some ways reflective of the most challenging parent. We

weren't ready to be making choices. We were looking at things from the wrong perspective and in immature ways. He was broken from his mother's and father's parenting, and so was I. In many ways it looked fine on the outside, but it really wasn't.

After we separated, I started working at this child and family guidance Center in Norfolk to supplement my income from the private practice. And that's when I worked with these children whose families were on Medicaid. I saw how shutdown they were at such an early age. I could see that the mothers were emotionally deprived and some weren't able to do the nurturing that the children needed and the children weren't getting full childhoods. Then they become angry and they don't care about other people—there is violence and crime, etc. When I was moving to Park City after my mother died, I was feeling guilty about leaving these kids and that's when the whole inspiration for *my nonprofit* came to me, walking on the beach before I moved here.

I was aware when mother called me and it was clear that she had had her stroke ... I felt a little bit guilty about this, because I really wanted to move West. I just felt like I'd have a more interesting life. It wasn't that I had a bad life at all but I wasn't meeting anybody, another man, and I just felt like I needed a change, and I was really drawn to the mountains. But I felt obligated and I wanted to be there when mother was there, so when [she had her stroke, I thought, "Maybe there's an end," which was a pretty primitive thought, but it was there. She had always been the one that I was taking care of. She died in '95. I started working on trying to find a job *in Utah*. I didn't want to move [without a job]—I mean I didn't know anybody. I wanted to be adventurous, but I also was very practical and I wanted to have a job before I moved. As it turned out, I really didn't have the security I wanted but I just got tired of waiting.

Becoming a therapist and going into psychiatry all has to do with self-healing and reversing the cycle. It's a healthy way to deal with problems...to turn around as a way of self-healing. Just like people who have been abused. I mean, they can either be abusive parents or they can make a focus on making sure their kids have the kind of balance and love that they didn't have. In all of this time that I'm talking about right now, there was a real self-awareness and growth. My children really were the center of my life and my concern, besides my own growth.

I was thinking today and I would say it's been a theme in my life and at my age of 70 right now. I was feeling almost tired.... it's a hopeless feeling to see so many people in need in our society and not supported. I think that from children that have difficult lives... to try to make their lives better ...to give them hope, to just help people in general being caught in traps in society because the way our society is structured. In our society, I mean, many people don't even realize.... the people that are making the government decisions and of course to me it's gotten worse and worse.... the people that don't have any money are the ones who the changes are being made on their backs. So you keep trying. [Public Health] was my education as to what the world was like and getting to know [my patients] as people, not just faces, and feeling good about trying to make a difference. The people who have mental illnesses are often at the bottom of the totem

pole. I mean they keep trying for parity and it doesn't happen. I never use that term (social justice), but certainly it describes what my life focus is and probably has been for a long time, which is wanting equality.

Grace's Story

My dad grew up in the stockyards district of Chicago in Logan Square; his parents were both immigrants. My maternal grandmother was a great believer in education *and went to* BYU Academy, and my mother attended BYU for one year on a business scholarship. During high school in Provo, my mother was the Utah State *and* Intermountain typing champion and shorthand champion in 1937. They were building Geneva steel for the war effort and she became the secretary for the purchasing agent. He wasn't competent with the job so she was the acting purchasing agent for the whole steel mill and my father was a purchasing agent for the construction of the Ironston steel mill in Springville. That's how they met, on the phone because they were both in the prewar buildup of the steel plants.

My dad did very well in the Navy. *He* was on a destroyer convoy that captured a U-boat that had an Enigma machine. They put a call through if anyone could speak German. My dad could speak both low and high German (because my grandmother's father was highborn and that was her dialect). He translated the German surrender of the U-boat *and* probably dissuaded a Polish sailor from sabotaging and sinking the U-boat and saved the Enigma machine. He went *on to be* a Chief Storekeeper and was really successful in the Navy at a young age.

After service in Trinidad he came back to Washington, D. C. Then he called my mother and she put in her application to do secretarial work as part of the war effort. She got a call that said 'we need your references' and the next day she was ordered to report to the White House. She got the highest security clearance, her offices were in the Executive Office Building, and she worked for the President. She typed up and participated in all the meetings preceding and after the Japanese surrender after the bombing [of Hiroshima and Nagasaki].

The war ended and my father went to work for the Bates and Rodger's Construction Company *in* Davenport, Iowa. *However*, my mother got pregnant and wanted to have the baby and live near her mother in Provo. She had Bill in June of 46. I was born in 48. So they came back to Utah and my dad got a job in a new company where he had to start from scratch—Utah Construction, which was a major contracting company.

My parents bought a house in West Salt Lake a couple months after Bill's birth, and then I came along and somewhere, I think when I was about a year old, my mother went to work. She went back to work as an executive secretary for US Steel in Salt Lake. My grandfather on my dad's side had passed away, so my grandmother Sophie came to live with us and took care of us -- my brother and I. My mother loved to work and probably needed to in her mind. I think she always psychologically needed to work and to have that external validation.

When I was in second grade, seven years old, my parents sold the house on the west side which was about 900 ft.² and we moved up to above Mount Olympus Acres above Wasatch Boulevard. That house was a 1950s midcentury modern home *and* was in the Parade of Homes. The key feature was it had two kitchens and it had a lower floor for my grandmother to have her bedroom. Sophie lived there only one year until my brother John was born and my mother quit work and was home. My father hated her working. He felt it was an insult that he couldn't take care of the family, and that she was working to make money [which] told all the neighbors that he made an inadequate income...and a decent woman stays at home. It was in the 1950s and my father was a person of his own ideas: he was very stubborn about them and he was sometimes unkind about them. But she just needed to work...being home she was unhappy. She would say, "I really need to go back to work but your father doesn't want me to," and things like that. She loved getting dressed up and she had beautiful clothes. She was just a career girl.

She just got very depressed; it was visible. I wouldn't have said depressed as a child, but I'd say unhappy and she started getting more and more difficult, critical, demanding. She would drink when my father got home but I don't remember daytime drinking or bored drinking being an issue for her. My father's drinking started getting out of control. He would come home and have three shots of bourbon and take a shower and then drink more. When my brother was born she said "now you're old enough, you're not a child anymore. Your job is to take care of your brother and to help me cook and clean." She fazed me out of Girl Scouts, so by the time I was in fifth grade I was told to get out of Girl Scouts and I took care of John; always, he was my assignment. Probably from the time he was nine-months old I changed his diapers, I folded his clothes, I started dinner, I made desserts.

Our house was immaculately clean. She cleaned herself up when my dad came home, but not so much during the day and she stopped buying things for herself. She was always worried about money, whether it was real or not. "We can't have that. It's just too expensive." I don't know if it was that if she didn't earn it herself, she couldn't spend it. Certainly we had a fancy house, but she was always complaining about money and telling us we couldn't have things because of money. I didn't get a bicycle until fourth grade and I only got that because the neighbors were going to give me one, and she was embarrassed and got mad at me for embarrassing her. "Children don't need this. You don't need this, you need to be home helping me."

There were some moves when I was in sixth grade and then my dad got transferred to Security, Colorado and he was on the first *construction* phase of the NORAD air defense command headquarters, Cheyenne Mountain, where they hollowed out the mountain. He did the financial end of the job: purchasing, products, hiring—everything but the engineering. My parents had a very intense relationship and maybe that comes out the fact that she worked with him in Colorado at NORAD air defense. She worked full-time in his office and they left at 6:30 in the morning and got back at 6:30 in the evening—long, long days...they were always together. It wasn't like we were one big family. It was like the parents and those kids. I think my father was a narcissist and I

think she was a conarcissist, where she felt important if she was with a narcissist. Together they had an almost unnatural closeness, where he always felt extra important if she idolized him, and if she was with a man she idolized, then she was really important.

My dad was very unhappy with his project supervisor and he quit Utah Construction at the end of that project and *after a few job changes took a job in Palo Alto. Eventually*, we moved to Fremont, California. *During this time* I went to the Catholic Church and our priests were very tied into Caesar Chavez's movement so we got very educated about what Caesar was doing. This is the point of disillusionment with everything I had been led to believe about the fairness and goodness of the world: that it wasn't for everybody. Perhaps in my own life it wasn't for me anymore. I think the world became a little bit heavy at this point.

My mother got breast cancer *when* I was 15 and they sent her home after a mastectomy and there was no support group. She was lonely and depressed. I drove her to the doctor when I was 16 *after* she had some follow-up surgery. I just took care of the house and my little brother. I helped her with cooking and I helped her change her dressings from radiation therapy. My father's drinking really escalated *and* he was unhappy in his job. I think she got more and more embarrassed to interact with people outside the family because of his drinking. We became a family that turned more and more in on itself.

My parents stopped supporting me as far as clothes or lunch money. I had to work and make my own money and take care of my brother. It was a lot of responsibility—I had a lot of responsibilities *and* they were abusive. My mother was turbulent and mercurial and controlling. My father drank a lot, but at this point they became verbally and physically abusive to where it was dangerous at home. This was my junior year of high school. I just stopped being at home because my father tried to kill me one night.

At that time he was drunk and my mother was just finding fault in her mind. I was an excellent student, I was involved in activities, I was trying to babysit and support myself as much as possible. I always took care of my brother, I did a lot of the dinners. She had a three-quarter time housekeeper, Lydia. So at that time, my dad was drunk and I can't remember a lot about it, but my mother was complaining about me and my father just got in a rage and he started kicking my head in, saying "I'm going to kill you. I'm going to kill you" and my mother just sat there saying "Do it Charlie. Do it. Just kill her." I was crawling around protecting my head. I just remember being on the ground. I don't even remember what room. Then, I don't know, something clicked in me. [I thought] I'm responsible for me. Whether it was gift of spirit...I mean there's always been a lot of [spiritual] help for me. I said "Fine, you can do this. I'm going to be dead probably in 20 minutes if you keep this up and what are you going to do? Are you going to hide the body? Are you to wrap me up? Are you going to bury me in the backyard? What are you going to tell the neighbors where I've gone? What are you to tell your sisters what happened?" And my mother said to Charlie, "You better stop." At that moment it was just like, "I can't rely on these people; they're crazy."

I thought it was never safe to be there, so I took every babysitting job I could get. I got away from the house with my friends. I guess that was my rebellion, other people could smoke pot after school. For me to be rebellious was to go to a high school football game, to not go home and be with nice girls. They never talked to me about my plans. How I figured out where I wanted to go *to college was*: I took a string and put it as far away from home as I could with the worst public transportation. It was a 5 1/2 hour drive from the Bay Area. Santa Barbara is very isolated. There are no trains; there's only a bus. I didn't want to have to come home. I didn't have a car. I had a bike. So I went to Santa Barbara and I loved school and I did well, I had a great time. I made good friends and it was a foundation of great happiness to do that.

I went home over Thanksgiving and it was better and Christmas was just lovely. She had returned to work as the secretary for the Education Department at Stanford, where she worked when the cancer was first diagnosed. She got really sick to her stomach Christmas night, her cancer had metastasized to her liver. She became very ill, but before that night things were good between us and she seemed happy. She was dead on the 26th of January. After my mother died, my dad just assumed I would come home and take care of everything. My aunt Erma stayed for a couple of weeks and then he hired the neighbor lady to help look in after my brother, as he travelled internationally with his job. She told him it would only be till June, until I returned from UC Santa Barbara, and I *would keep* house for my father. My mother's housekeeper, Lydia, watched John in the morning *while* I went to school and I watched John in the afternoon and cooked for the first summer, and then she moved away in the fall and he didn't replace her. I was taking physics and chemistry and calculus, but my father didn't believe in women going to college, so I had to pay for it myself. I cleaned the house and did all the washing and ironing and raised my brother. My father gave me \$100 a month and out of that I paid for my college and my expenses for myself.

My mother had been dead for about two years and I had been raising my brother and going to Cal State, Hayward *when* my dad lost his job. He said "I'm going to move and buy a farm." I wasn't invited to go with them. I said "tell me about this house." He said "There's two bedrooms," and I said "Well there's not room for me is there?" and he said "No, you're not coming." So I married my husband *Bill*- he was my brother's roommate, *we had been dating* two years, I couldn't find a job, he had proposed, and I thought 'I'll make this work'.

I was married in the Catholic Church but was disillusioned when we moved to the San Joaquin Valley, which was a farming valley. Bill was working *as Continuation High School educator* and his students were farmworkers and *their children*. I was still going to church *but* when we went to church *in the valley* I just couldn't believe the hatred and the social division that was supported by the church structure. I remember really distinctly that they told the farmworkers to sit in the back and we had to pray for the growers in the dispute with the farmworkers, so I left the Catholic Church. So this really changed my life—I became much more political.

Bill and I took on the responsibility of running the George McGovern campaign for Northern Tulare County, where we were living. *Bill* is not someone who does much. He was kind of a sit in the chair and theorize guy. So I got involved and I ran the campaign for Northern Tulare County and we registered people to vote. At the same time we were trying to get George McGovern to win the primary there was also a proposition to strip the farmworkers of collective bargaining rights. So we worked with the farmworkers and registered a lot of people to vote. We worked hand in hand with the local farmworker leaders. I was a poll watcher *and* the people in charge of the elections would deny some of the people we registered to vote the ability to vote. I had to go and fight with the County Clerk. It really gave me a feeling that I could do something.

When I left Bill, I was only married for less than five years. He was just emotionally barren. He made no effort at all to talk to me. He expected me to be his handmaiden. Just simple statements like “I don’t want you to say anything in front of my friends because you’re too stupid.” He had open crushes on other people. The pregnancy was an accident *and* I was working towards leaving him when I got pregnant. Probably six weeks after we got married, I realized he was just emotionally a mess—someone who really needed therapy to grow up. He was just angry and a child. Up to this realization, I just thought this anger was a political response—that it was all this anger at Vietnam. But he was just angry at the world. He was angry that he had to grow up. There was nothing democratic about our household and nothing respectful towards me as a woman.

Karin was born in ‘71. I tried to stay in *the marriage* as long as I could. I was taking college classes at night *but* it was just more and more clear that the marriage was a failure and I was thinking about next steps. *I divorced in ‘73, and* my friends became counterculture people I met in the election and I met in Fresno. I was just a part of the counterculture, the food coop...It was really cool. I guess you would call me a hippie. It was a great place to have no money. I could have a Volkswagen and live in the ghetto and have a child on my own. The rest of the culture was pretty straight-forward, much like it was in the 50s. But in the counterculture, I fit in fine and I had really lovely friends who were artists and musicians. I had a nice niche where I felt I belonged. I was involved in getting an alternative birthing center off the ground. I was involved with Planned Parenthood. I was involved in the food coop. We had a cooperative day care, I was the vice president of it and wrote all the grants. My whole life was building social change in an alternative community *and* there was lots of room to do interesting things and make a difference.

I had a great friend, Becky Turner, and she was a very interesting person. She was from the South and got involved in the Southern Christian leadership conference working against racism in the South *with* Martin Luther King’s group. She had a degree in sociology and was directly trained by Saul Alinski, *who* was a founder of community organizing. She was just a phenomenal person and the summer I was deciding to leave Bill I moved in with Betsy for a month to help her. We (the Women’s Democratic Political Caucus) were doing a big demonstration against Earl Butz, who was head of the agricultural department under Nixon and there was \$100 a plate dinner at the Civic

Center. So Betsy and I organized a \$.19 a plate dinner, which was what was allowed by welfare at the time for food stamps. We cooked a \$.19 a plate dinner, which was beans and rice, and we had it in the parking lot across from Earl Butz's \$100 a plate dinner because he was blocking anymore food subsidies to the poor. We had a great time. In fact, NBC nightly national news carried it, *showing* Karin (my daughter) and me serving beans and rice.

We had done so well at the primary election for McGovern, that a prominent Democrat gave us an abandoned building [as headquarters for the general election]. It was a fry cook restaurant *and* was condemned so we didn't have a toilet, we didn't have water, and we didn't have electricity. *My friend* Marsha and I scraped all the grease out *and* we had to tear down the wallpaper. I mean we really took it over—we painted the floor red, we painted the walls white, we put Democratic posters up. One of my friends was a potter and she made us a huge sign: Democratic Headquarters. We were very proud of it. We even got harassed by the police.

There was a doorway and the concrete spilled out to the curb. I painted it Navy blue and I stenciled white stars. My neighbor was really sweet. He used to work for the City and he said "Grace, you're going to get a visit from the Chief of Police who's going to try to arrest you for putting those stars on the sidewalk because they think you're un-American." And I said "Thanks Leman, but I'm surprised. It's not the flag. It's just stars on navy blue." He said "Okay this is what you're going to do. You're going to say *you were* inspired by the movie theater because their sidewalk is painted, because he's going to try to arrest you for painting the sidewalk. But what they're mad about is you. I am a Republican, but they don't like Democrats and they don't like White people talking to Hispanics." So sure enough, the Chief of Police showed up and said "You painted the sidewalk here, I'm going to have to take you in." So I said "Oh, I was inspired by the movie theater! That's so beautiful!" Because in the meantime I'd gone by and *seen* the green paint goes over the sidewalk. "I just loved that. So I guess you're going to arrest the movie theater owner too!" He walked away; he was furious.

So anyway, we had this abandoned building. The first phase of the campaign is registering people to vote, to go door to door. If you're not registered, that's what we did really well—we registered a lot of people to vote. We had no phones and this was a condemned building, so we went door to door, and after you talk to someone and they indicate they are pro-your party you write them a note on a card and it's very personal: 'Hi, I sure enjoyed talking to you. Remember the election is on this date and if you need any help getting to the polls, be sure and call me, here's my number.' It's all hand written. So after you go door to door we have to write out 100 or 150 notes. We had our camping lantern and we had card tables in the headquarters writing these letters but we had forgotten to lock the door and this guy came in with a big pistol and he's really drunk. There were two or three guys but this one guy had a pistol he had drawn and he said, "What are you doing here?" It was me and Marsha and this other girl Becky who might've even been in high school.

I don't know, but I thought 'Well I'm the mom here. Marsha is just a freshman in college.' So I said, "You know what we are doing?" and we had a picture of Bobby Kennedy with George McGovern. "We love Bobby Kennedy. Do you love Bobby Kennedy?" [He said], "Yeah I love Bobby Kennedy!" We had a picture of Caesar Chavez and I said, "We're here because Bobby Kennedy loves this man and you can help us!" [He said], "I can help you?" And we loaded them up with tape and McGovern posters and when he and his friends got out, we locked the door. Then we kind of hid until they were out of sight. Then at last, when we drove home, *we noticed* they had pasted *posters all over* the Bank of America and other buildings down Main Street.

I got on the enemies list, the Nixon enemies list. It was pretty innocent, but I had a strong relationship with a really lovely man that was very supportive of the farmworkers union, and he lived with me off and on. He would come and stay with me on the weekends and one of our good friends that visited was a member of the Brown Berets, and the group and its members were on the Enemies list for Nixon. So our house [got on the list] too because he was with me on the weekends, and I had a birthday party for our friend in the Brown Berets' son and our phone got tapped by the FBI. A part of the list was made public in a big media exposé, and there we were. There was some danger in doing what we were doing and some risk of exclusion from the economic main stream. We really didn't know if we would have a positive future because the President put you on a list that you shouldn't be hired for certain things. Much later, I was approached by the Democratic Party to run for City Council, and when I explained I had worked for the Farmworkers' Union in Delano and participated in picketing farms, they agreed it was too great a liability for running for local office.

I worked as a unit secretary at a hospital first part-time and then full-time to support us from the time I left Bill until my daughter turned about seven. During the same period I went to Cal State Fresno with a load that ranged from full to part time to finish my degree and I also committed time to volunteering for Planned Parenthood, the Birthing Center, and the cooperative daycare and others. I had to work more approaching full-time for Karin, *who* was becoming very mainstream. She wanted a real mother and a real house. She wanted giggles jeans with the pictures on the pockets. She wanted Macy's clothes, no more thrift store clothes. I had a mainstream kid to raise and I had an ex-husband who was pushing for custody and my father's wife also decided she wanted [custody of Karin]. She had a son Karin's age and she couldn't have more children so she wanted me to give Karin up to my dad and her. I had all these people questioning my ability to be a parent, so I really felt I needed to be mainstream, or I might lose her to people who could provide her more stuff. She was the most important thing in my life.

My girlfriend found me this job and it was with the City Zoo as a researcher. I put all the animals in a databank and I did public education displays. I became very interested in the work, much more aware of the environment and habitat issues, and am still an avid bird watcher. I went from the zoo to working as a city planner and in this time I took three more classes including environmental and planning classes and finished my Bachelor's degree. I became an urban planner for the City of Fresno. In my first job as a

planner, I was working specific plans and we had a trail project *which* was really interesting because it was a great proposal for a trail along the riverside and we went to a hearing *but* there was nobody there to support it. What I was so taken with was just how absent from the political process the public is. I think this is something I have continued *to be concerned about* in my professional life *and went on to be* a certified professional for public participation.

Initially, I think I was very much a counter culture person. I was an outsider pressing for change on the outside. I was the strident voice for change. I got a job as a planner and I'm an insider and what I observed is power, and how well power works—power is connections. So I really learned the power of being an insider. I met [my friend] Katie and we just had a great time volunteering for campaigns. We were both single and pretty; we were invited to host all the fundraisers, and went up to volunteer for the national Democratic convention. I met Coretta Scott King *and* talked to Ralph Nader for half an hour.

Later I was the Fresno County person that was in charge of the campaign for Gary Hart—it was called California Democrats for New Leadership and it was to bring fiscal responsibility to the Democratic Party, which is a big issue for me. I've always been a money-conservative. So that was kind of my social life—a lot of political parties with *my friend* Katie *who also* got me involved with the Junior League. Talk about being an insider. Even the Republican assemblyman's wives were all in Junior League. You really meet the movers and shakers...the things that you can get done with the money and their organization. It was just incredible. After *the* provisional year, I was in charge of many projects and it was so great because of my grassroots experience, I knew what needed to be done. We adopted the playroom for the battered women's shelter. *Later on*, I was resource manager at the county and one of my employee's wives was a labor and delivery room nurse at the county hospital. She was sending babies home wrapped in newspapers. So we made layettes for these low-income families. I think we provided 1,000 in a year and they still do it—it's still something that's going on. You know those women; they could raise money and get stuff done.

I was connected to the poor people and they *were* not and they were open to me. I was like their token hippie and they would laugh at me with my pocket knife and my avocado for lunch. *But they* liked me and I did quite well in League and was honored with leadership positions. I enjoyed them. I've had a lot of experience with poor people and people that are really struggling. *I realized I needed* to understand how wealthy people live. I wanted to make a difference in life and *this* was a whole strata of society I hadn't associated with freely since high school or maybe college. I just thought 'I want to understand what this is all about'. By this time, I had left my urban planning position with the city and went to work for the county. I was a solid waste planner and had operational responsibilities for a new rural drop-off recycling program, and prepared waste reduction and recycling public education for the entire County, just under a half-million people. I really had a very demanding, political job and worked directly with a number of elected officials, made public presentations weekly, and was a regular radio

and TV guest. I was *becoming* pretty mainstream and I thought ‘I know everybody in the Fresno area. I want to know these people—I want to figure it all out’. By observing how major decisions are made and money spent, I saw how I thought I could work at this level, but work differently and motivated by my values... Also I saw a disconnect in the environmental values of the people I met in the county and the public works hierarchy and elected officials. This period of my life was a period of challenge and success. In ten years I went from an outsider to an important position—Resources Manager for a large County...water, sewer, services for rural areas, landfills, recycling...was a state figure drafting legislation & making statewide and national presentations. I started a Masters in Public Administration program to see if I could work into a leadership position with greater influence.

I was really not looking ever to get married again, and then I met Scot on a blind date in April of ‘87 while I was getting my Master’s degree. He was just great and the more I was with Scot the more I thought ‘this is the nicest man I’ve ever met.’ We married seven months later.

The month I graduated from USF, I received a promotion to County Resource Manager, essentially deputy director of public works in charge of water planning, solid and hazardous waste, some parks, and unincorporated area water and sewer services. I was the first non-engineer and first woman in the position in the county, possibly the first woman statewide. I was also the first female certified landfill manager in California, and the second in North America. I operated four landfills, one of them a hazardous waste landfill in CERCLA closure. I had a division of 20 or so people and an annual budget of about \$8 million. *Later*, I left the County and worked for a consulting solid waste engineering company in Sacramento and San Francisco as a project manager and local government services manager.

After a few years, and just following Karin’s graduation from UCSB, Scot’s *business took us to Utah*, so I left my job and moved to Utah with nothing. I volunteered for a year at USEE, Utah Society for Environment Education. I thought maybe something I wanted to do was environmental education. I also got some contract work with Rural Community Assistance, which I really liked—they help tribes and poor communities provide public services and housing.

Eventually driven by finances, I went back to full-time consulting, and at the same time I got into the University of Utah in their alternative dispute program, thinking that the way that I thought environmental issues were going needed facilitating and mediating partnerships. We need to resolve conflict and we need to have meaningful dialogue and I thought maybe that would help *us* get there. I became a certified mediator and I became a good facilitator. So I did that while I was working for Weston Engineering, which is an environmental engineering company *with* national headquarters in Pennsylvania. I worked out of the Colorado office and my home office was the Utah office. They put pressure on, so some weeks I worked 60 or 80 hours. I was still in school and I was helping Scot with work, doing a volunteer internship with the Aids Foundation,

and volunteer mediating victim-offender and landlord tenant cases. And you know again, it was just the bottom line—make money, make money, make money for these people. So I left and became a freelance consultant to finish some work in Santa Barbara. I did two contracts for them and picked up other contract work. By having my own business I could work with Scot and keep our business, which was really the moneymaker, and then I started my writing about homes and for the magazines. I continued with the Aids Foundation for a year, and landlord-tenant mediations for three or four years until a change in law made them too difficult to mediate.

In Utah, Scot said I needed a hobby so I started gardening. I needed to learn to relax and it is coming here I learned to really enjoy life more...hike and walk and garden. I don't have to make all the money, *although* I've been working a lot—I was writing two books, working for three or four magazines, consulting jobs. There was no time to do much volunteering but recently now I don't have that much and I don't know. I don't know what the future's going to be. I know I don't want to quit, I want to do something new and I'm kind of open to it.

I'm really a happy person but I find that some people express an entitlement above others. I believe in justice and justice includes the right to be happy *and* to have many onerous burdens lifted—I did have security and happiness early. I think the other is I learned to own myself and my behavior and to be totally responsible for my decisions *for* good or bad and the consequences they bring. It was a bad decision to marry Karin's dad. My father limited my decision options, but I made that one. I certainly got a beautiful child—that was my decision. I was tired and I think I wanted to be loved.

My spirituality and social consciousness are connected. I learned to trust myself, *in time* I learned to trust other people, but I always trusted spirit. I've always felt from the youngest age that if I don't know what to do that I can pray and it becomes clear. I have to walk around. Maybe it's a week later, but I've always relied on prayer and I believe that there is an innate goodness that you can see in the planet. I think that environmentalism and spiritualism—they are one. It's one planet with an exhibition of the great wholeness and wonderment. I believe that God is just and as creatures of God, we should be just. We should be fair, we should be loving—the God I know is very loving. So it's my job to be loving. The only limitation of God in this world is no hands. He has to rely on our hands. So that's my spiritualism and I think that no matter how simple, I felt that it was my duty always to be a person that God would demand me to be in any job.

CURRICULUM VITAE

SUSAN SEYMOUR

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Education:**Ph.D. in Education: Curriculum and Instruction**

Utah State University August, 2012
Concentrations: Adult & Higher Education, Program Planning & Evaluation, Qualitative Research Methods, Learning Theories, Student-Centered Pedagogy.
Dissertation: The Use of Life History Collage to Explore Learning Related to the Enactment of Social Consciousness in Female Non-Profit Leaders.

Doctoral Studies in Education: Adult, Continuing and Higher Education

University of British Columbia ABD: September, 1994
Concentrations: Program Planning & Evaluation, Adult Learning Theory, Instruction Methods for Adult Learners.

M.S. in Technology Education

Colorado State University May, 1991
Concentrations: Adult Education, Instructional Technology
Thesis: Cooperative Learning in a Post-Secondary Computer Aided Design Class.

B.S. in Industrial Management

Colorado State University December, 1987

Work History with Select Accomplishments:**Director of Instructional Design Services****October 2011 – Present**

Utah Valley University, Department of Distance Education – Orem, Utah
Manage a team of instructional designers and creative staff in the design, development, implementation, assessment and branding of UVU's online programs including course standards, template design, content development, video and media production, photography, graphics, interactive programming, and web page layout. Developed and implemented the first ever quality standards for UVU online courses and communicated

expectations of rigor, fair use guidelines, design deadlines and intellectual property policies to designing faculty. Standardized instructional design practices to incorporate curricular alignment, backwards design, course blueprint development, design collaboration and standardized formative and summative course evaluations. Facilitated faculty voice in UVU's online courses through the definition of instructional flex points, utilization of LMS social media features, instructor greeting, course photography and a 'sense of place' in UVU courses. Developed campus partnerships and strategic relationships that fostered faculty buy-in to new standards as evidenced by doubling the number of courses in the design queue. Strategized and rendered a multimedia marketing campaign that communicated a Distance Education lifestyle as flexible, connected, savvy, and successful. Participated in cross campus committees and initiatives to foster proactive instructional design and innovative solutions to institutional needs.

Adjunct Faculty

September 2008 – Present (part-time)

Westminster College, Department of Adult Education - Salt Lake City, Utah
Develop and teach master's level courses in Program Planning & Evaluation, Instructional Methods for Adults, and Adult Learning Theory. Determine course content based on program objectives and assessment criteria; advise and council students towards learning success; develop learning management system content and web-based teaching applications; facilitate student-centered learning experiences; assist students to develop and implement transfer of learning strategies; and execute student assessments through a variety of mechanisms including learning contracts, portfolios, peer review and faculty evaluation. Coteach master's level course in Qualitative Research Methods which includes assisting students in determining research questions, structuring literature reviews and choosing appropriate data collection strategies. Review student proposals, respond to questions and advise students regarding theory, literature and research methods.

Director of U.S. Programs and Trustee, Nishtha October 2009 - Present (volunteer)

Nishtha, Baruipur, South 24-Parganas, West Bengal, India, Pin – 700144
Developed a non-profit organization aimed at expanding awareness in the United States of the difficulties facing impoverished girls and women in rural India. Facilitate multiple fair trade contracts between textile artisans in rural India and craft vendors in the United States, which contributes much needed income to poor, rural women and is leading to sustained livelihoods for more than fifty Indian artisans. Evaluate grass roots programming and communicate fiscal needs, program plans and evaluation strategies to Western funding agencies. Develop outreach and education efforts including partner marketing and web site design, development and maintenance.

Research Analyst

November 2010 – September 2011 (part-time)

Utah Valley University, Department of Institutional Research and Information – Orem, Utah

Project director and analyst on multiple, simultaneous research projects that inform strategic directions and growth decisions for academic departments as well as the

executive council of the University. Duties include test administration, survey development, data maintenance and analysis, data mining from federal and institutional sources, report writing and dissemination.

Artist, Author, Mother

January, 2001 – August 2008

Created a home-based art business while caring for two children. Success as artist demonstrated through the conceptualization and articulation of original, one-of-a-kind works of art which sold at fine art galleries and top regional art festivals, and resulted in multiple “Best of Show” awards. Managed inventory, organized production schedules, tracked costs and profit margins, developed marketing materials and website, and created shipping and custom order procedures. Obtained a book contract from Sterling Publishers, developed and facilitated art workshops, and participated in multiple television and radio interviews including a feature television segment filmed for HGTV (Home and Garden Television) geared toward educating adults on original art techniques.

Study Coordinator/Research Analyst

May, 1994 – January, 1996

Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation - Bethesda, MD

Managed all aspects of a United States Department of Health and Human Services training grant that evaluated the effectiveness of a substance abuse prevention training program. Helped develop pre and post-training evaluation surveys based on research questions. Tracked training participants and delivered surveys pre-training, immediately post-training, and both one and three months post-training. Developed data entry systems, entered and cleaned both quantitative and qualitative data, and conducted data analysis. Cooperated in writing research results in a series of compliance reports and managed a research budget in excess of \$200,000.

Adult Educator & Teaching Assistant - ESL

August, 1991 – August, 1993

Ministry of Education - Shizuoka, Japan

Taught English and cultural awareness to Japanese students at Tokyo Electric Company, a college preparatory high school, a vocational high school, and a junior high school. Developed and executed lesson plans aimed at improving conversational English and an understanding of the Western world.

Training Coordinator

May, 1986 – June, 1991

ComputerLand – Ft. Collins, CO

Developed and implemented training classes and technical support procedures for a wide variety of business software programs. Supplied telephone support to end-users of software products, documented all “bugs” in software, and communicated problems to software development team. Wrote support manuals documenting common problems and procedures. Developed and wrote training curricula, delivered on and off-site training, and developed post-training support materials. Managed both the hardware and software function of a twelve station micro-computer training laboratory. Marketed training courses to the public through advertising, business presentations, and the publication of a monthly training newsletter

Academic Presentations & Awards:

Seymour, S. (2012). *Life history collage as a method to explore learning, knowing, and meaning*, Paper presented at the 2012 AERA annual meeting, April 13th –17th, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

Seymour, S., Mitchell, J., Cox, S., Boswell, W., & Beck, C. (2012). *Engaging the Online Learner*. Panel presentation at the Scholarship of Teaching and Engagement Conference, March 25th - 26th, Orem, Utah.

Cain, M. & **Seymour, S.** (2011). *Understanding social justice learning in context: The usefulness of complexity thinking and social movement learning theories*. Paper presented at the joint conference of the Adult Educators Research conference and the Canadian Association for Studies in Adult Education annual meeting, June 10th – 12th, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

Seymour, S. (2011). *The use of life history collage to investigate significant learning experiences of female development leaders from India*. Paper presented at the joint conference of the Adult Education Research Conference and the Canadian Association for Studies in Adult Education annual meeting, June 10th – 12th, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

Seymour, S. (2010). *Arts-informed research used to consider learning associated with empowerment in three female development leaders from India*. Paper presented at the 13th annual Intermountain Graduate Research Symposium, March 31st, Logan, UT.

2010-2011 Center for Women and Gender research grant, Utah State University. Small research grants furthering the goal and vision of making meaningful contributions to the studies of women and gender.

Academic Publications:

Hansen, J. & **Seymour, S.** (2012). Exploring women's learning about gender diversity in a religiously conservative state in America. *Advancing Women in Leadership Journal*, 32. http://advancingwomen.com/awl/Vol32_2012

Training evaluation report of 1994-5 profile, feedback, and follow-up data. (Contract #277-91-2004), Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation and the University of British Columbia, Faculty of Education. Rockville, MD: USHHS, SAMHASA, Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, Division of Community Prevention and Training, Training and Evaluating Branch.

Profile, Feedback and Follow-up Findings, 1993-1994. Mid-study findings and recommendations: Evaluation of CSAP's training system and associated technical

assistance services. Bethesda: Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation.

Seymour, S. (1994). Operative Computer Learning with Cooperative Task and Reward Structures. *Journal of Technology Education*, 5(2), 120 - 125.

Leadership

UVSELF (Utah Valley Senior Leadership Forum) 2012 Cohort
Utah Valley University Curriculum Steering Committee 2011 – present
Park City Professional Artist Association President 2006-2007
Park City Professional Artist Association Vice President 2004-2005

Nonacademic Presentations, Publications and Awards:

Seymour, Susan (2005). *Perfect Paper Mosaics*, New York: Sterling Publishers.

KPCW – Public Radio interview on November 11, 2006 regarding community based arts in the Summit County area.

Home & Garden Television – That’s Clever, October 26, 2006. Feature television segment showing techniques involved in paper mosaic art. May be accessed through <http://www.hgtv.com/crafting/interactive-intention-clock/index.html>

Park City Television - Eye on Design, April 2007. Feature television segment based on artist interview, artwork and artistic renovation. May be viewed at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7VsKeM_FE1Q

2004 – Tempe Spring Arts Festival - Best of Show, 2D Mixed Media
2004 – Capital Hill Arts Festival - Best of Show, Mixed Media
2005 – Patrick Moore Gallery Exhibition - Best of Show
2007 – Utah Arts Festival - Best of Show, Board of Directors Jury
2007 – Park City Kimball Arts Festival - Best of Show, 3D Mixed Media
2008 – Beverly Hills Affaire in the Garden - 3rd place, Mixed Media